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Here I am now! : community service-learning with immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and youth : the use of critical pedagogy, situated-learning and funds of knowledge.

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HERE I AM NOW! COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING WITH IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUTH: THE USE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, SITUATED-LEARNING AND FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

A Dissertation Presented

by

JANNA SHADDUCK-HERNÁNDEZ

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ABSTRACT

HERE I AM NOW! COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING WITH IMMIGRANT AND REFUGEE UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS AND YOUTH: THE USE OF CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, SITUATED-LEARNING AND FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE

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Here I am Now! was the title immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and local refugee community youth gave to their participatory photography installation displayed at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. This exhibit was the culmination of students' participation in a series of alternative community service-learning (CSL) courses offered through CIRCLE (Center for Immigrant and Refugee Community Leadership and Empowerment). Here first-generation undergraduate students mentored neighboring Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee youth using photography and art and applying community development education principles and techniques.

While community service-learning pedagogy has become an established educational practice on most U.S. universities and colleges today, little research has been conducted viewing the educational impact of community service-learning pedagogy on diverse student populations. The majority of the scholarship in this field focuses on the experiences of white middle-class students engaged in service-learning relationships with communities from *unfamiliar and different* socio-cultural, racial, ethic and economic backgrounds (Dunlap, 1998).

This dissertation presents a different perspective. Here I examine how immigrant and refugee undergraduate students understood and made meaning of their participation in a community service-learning experience with youth from *familiar* and *similar* ethno-cultural contexts. This model valued participants' common cultural assets, highlighted the immigrant and refugee experience, and attended to specific local refugee community needs. To answer my research questions I applied critical ethnographic approaches and analyzed student narratives (interviews, journal entries, reflection papers, poetry and photography) to better understand participants' community-service learning experiences.

Through the prisms of three educational learning theories I review the university context, highlight aspects of the situation under study and proceed to build an emerging framework for CSL pedagogy with diverse communities. These theories include; experiential and critical pedagogy, situated learning theory, and the anthropological concept, funds of knowledge, as guides toward developing culturally relevant CSL curriculum with immigrant and refugee learners. Through student narratives, I demonstrate that critical CSL curriculum and service that emphasize peer learning and strategic and cultural resources (funds of knowledge), provide diverse undergraduate students with alternative and creative spaces of critique and possibility in their higher education and community service-learning experiences.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

"Art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it."- Bertolt Brecht

Introduction

"Here I am Now!" – was the title of a photography installation created by immigrant and refugee undergraduate students at the University of Massachusetts Amherst together with neighboring refugee youth. This exhibit was the culmination of the Visual Portrayal Project, a participatory community project developed and conducted by a group of immigrant and refugee undergraduate students with Chancellor's office funds to equip local Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee youth with cameras to document their lives and their communities. The undergraduate students were motivated to develop this project through their participation in a series of alternative community service-learning courses offered through CIRCLE (Center for Immigrant and Refugee Community Leadership and Empowerment). CIRCLE was a 6-year statewide collaboration (1994-2000) amongst immigrant and refugee communities, 3 University of Massachusetts campuses (Boston, Lowell and Amherst), and the Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants. The central mission of CIRCLE was to generate dialogue and new learning opportunities across refugee and immigrant groups and educational institutions through community education and immigrant and refugee leadership (Arches, Darlington-Hope, Gerson, Gibson, Habana-Hafner & Kiang, 1997). A unique component of CIRCLE at the University of Massachusetts Amherst site

was developing peer mentor relationships between immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and refugee community youth. For four years, I was part of the team of graduate students and faculty that coordinated and facilitated the education classes and research agendas of the Amherst site.

"Here I am Now!" was just one of the many student-initiated projects that sprung from CIRCLE, an educational process that encouraged first-generation refugee and immigrant undergraduate students and local refugee youth to work together over various semesters through a series of community service-learning (CSL) courses. These CSL courses aimed to build immigrant and refugee university student peer relations across similar and familiar ethnic communities. Through projects like "Here I am Now!" students were exposed to community development education principles and practice that attached importance to participants' knowledge and expertise. By encouraging undergraduates to mentor and work creatively with refugee youth from similar and familiar backgrounds, the project strove to highlight undergraduate participants' cultural and linguistic assets, underscore the diversity of the immigrant and refugee experience, and attend to specific community needs, in this case, supporting refugee youth. The courses promoted culturally relevant community organizing and curriculum versus charity or help-oriented development and service-learning approaches. Through photography, art, poetry, reflection papers, and journal writing students conveyed how their cultural and strategic resources as immigrants and refugees allowed them to claim a space, a voice, and visibility within the university and the communities where they worked (Trend, 1997; Witherell & Noddings, 1991).

This dissertation examines how immigrant and refugee undergraduate students understood and made meaning of their classroom and community service-learning experiences working with neighboring refugee youth from familiar and similar ethno-cultural contexts. The data for this study stem from the CIRCLE project over a two-year period (1996-1998). The focus of the study is on ten refugee and immigrant undergraduate participants (all foreign-born/first generation students) who developed the Visual Portrayal community photography project with neighboring Cambodian and Vietnamese refugee youth. "Here I am Now!" was the final photography exhibit of this larger project.

The educational courses that CIRCLE endorsed to develop such student-community driven projects centered on immigrant and refugee community development through peer and community youth relationships, community outreach, and cultural identity development. This was accomplished by applying experiential and critical pedagogy, encouraging context-specific peer learning, and exploring students' and communities' cultural and strategic resources (funds of knowledge). Students articulated how they applied their funds of knowledge like cooking or playing traditional games in their community service-learning experiences through their journal writing, reflection papers, classroom activities like role plays, and community mapping and visual media like photography and video. It was this combination of classroom activities, community outreach, and individual and collective reflection that served as the educational foundation leading to the "Here I Am Now!" exhibit.

In this dissertation I analyze how ten refugee and immigrant undergraduate students understood and experienced their participation in CIRCLE by asking the following research questions:

- In what ways do immigrant and refugee students understand and make meaning of their participation in a service-learning course that engages them with ethnically, racially and culturally similar and familiar refugee youth?
- How do students describe their experiences of learning and working collectively (in peer groups) as mentors and organizers in their community service-learning outreach and classroom activities?
- How do refugee and immigrant undergraduate students reflect upon their academic and personal experiences after participating in a community service-learning program that incorporated experiential pedagogy, promoted situated learning, and legitimated students' identities, cultures and communities?

Although the field of community service-learning is rapidly expanding, universities have generally struggled to offer racially and ethnically diverse students meaningful educational opportunities that engage them with local communities (Miller & Scott, 2000; Coles, 1999; Arches, et al., 1997). Zuniga, Hernandez-Leon, Shadduck, and Villareal (2002) point out that

> projects that bind universities and communities have encountered all sorts of obstacles, one of which is a Euro-centric educational perspective that ignores the culture, knowledge and experiences of non-European immigrant communities. (p.109)

In this dissertation, I review the university's legacy of Euro-centric curriculum, research and knowledge production, and the historical segregation of ethnically and racially diverse students in higher education. This review serves as a point of departure for

exploring the experiences of refugee and immigrant students of color on campuses today and the educational responses that challenge persistent Euro-centric values in university and community relations.

To explore how refugee and immigrant students understood their experiences in a series of alternative community service-learning courses, I apply critical ethnography and the extended case study as my research approaches. Critical ethnography

> not only discloses hegemonic structures but opens new inter-actional and curricular strategies to capitalize on the linguistic and cultural richness of students' background through intensive, collaborative, joint construction of knowledge in the classroom [and community settings]. (Trueba & McLaren, 2000, p. 60)

In this study critical ethnography allowed me to more clearly understand and describe specific classroom and community activities, set them within the wider context of the university, and offer alternative ways of thinking about community service-learning with diverse communities. Burawoy (1991) explains the extended case method as "examining how a social situation is shaped by external forces" arguing that "participant observation can examine the macro world through the way the latter shapes and in turn is shaped and conditioned by the micro world, the everyday world of face-to-face interaction" (p. 6). Using students' reflection papers, journals, photography, and in-depth interviews along with my own observations and field notes, I describe how students understood and experienced their participation through three dimensions of the CIRCLE project:

1. the community service-learning relationship between refugee and immigrant undergraduate students and refugee youth from familiar and similar ethnic communities

2. the collective learning process between familiar and similar university peers and community youth in the classroom and in the community service-learning experience.
3. the students' individual academic and personal experiences as a result of participating in a CSL course that focused on immigrant and refugee issues.

As a participant, facilitator, and researcher in this project, my voice is also interwoven with those of the student participants

In this dissertation I analyze secondary data previously generated as part of the CIRCLE project over a two-year period (1996-1998). The data in this dissertation stem from the reflection papers, journal entries and student/youth photography produced by the study's ten undergraduate student participants. These data emerged as part of CIRCLE's community development and service-learning education course requirements. In addition, I include data generated from ten in-depth interviews I conducted with each participant in 1998 but only recently transcribed. As a CIRCLE project research associate and a course facilitator, I also include my classroom and community participant observations and field notes. To facilitate my interpretation of students' experiences in this community service-learning process, I have chosen to analyze the data through three theoretical frames. Following Burawoy's (1991) description of the case method, I have looked for theories that "highlight aspects of the situation under study and then proceed to build (or rethink) these theories by reference to the wider forces at work" (p. 6).

I have chosen the following three theoretical perspectives because I believe they illuminate and help explain critical aspects of the CIRCLE project. I begin by looking at

experiential and critical pedagogies (Freire, 1970; Sleeter, 1996; Giroux, 1997) and their connections to community service-learning with diverse student communities. Subsequently, I review situated learning theory and the notions of activity, context, and peer relations (Lave & Wenger, 1991; Wertsch, 1990; Tejada, Espinoza & Guiterrez, 2003) as a lens through which to rethink service-learning models. Finally I explore the anthropological concept of funds of knowledge as a guide to developing curriculum and community service-learning approaches (Olmedo, 1997; Velez-Ibanez, 1995; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992).

Participatory and experiential teaching and research methods were at the core of project philosophy. In fact the director and the graduate students engaged in this endeavor had many years of adult education and community development experience engaging with these methods. Another important aspect of the project was the collective and collaborative focus of the project's classroom and community work. CIRCLE promoted group activities in the classroom, peer team formation for students service project, and collaborative projects working with community partners to name a few. Finally, students in CIRCLE were continuously encouraged to draw on their cultural and strategic resources (funds of knowledge) in the classroom and their community service and outreach. Students expressed how they applied their funds of knowledge through visual and written narratives assigned as part of the CSL courses. These narratives serve as a major part of the research data for this study. In essence, I am interested in analyzing participants' narratives and interviews through these theoretical frames as a way to explore how culturally and socially relevant educational processes may enhance

the community service-learning experience for students of color (Gates, 1992; Delgado-Gaitan, 1996; Kanopol, 1997; Storrs & Lesage, 2003).

Having briefly introduced the dissertation topic I continue with the problem statement. The following section includes the purpose of this study and the major research questions. The subsequent section discusses the study's significance. Thereafter I explain the assumptions underlying this study. I conclude this chapter with a description of the organization of the study.

Statement of Problem

Community service-learning has become an established programmatic structure on most U.S. campuses today. Close to one thousand national campuses boast of a center dedicated to community service-learning or research agendas focused on civic and community issues linked to service (Campus Compact, http://www.compact.org). Nevertheless little research has been conducted on viewing the experiences and educational impact of community service-learning pedagogy on refugee and immigrant undergraduate students in particular and students of color in general. The majority of the scholarship in this field concentrates on the experiences of white middle-class students engaged in service-learning relationships with communities of color in marginalized and oppressed neighborhoods or schools (Moley, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Ilustre, 2002; Green, 2001; Eyler & Giles, 1999, Dunlap, 1998; Hayes & Cuban, 1997; Coles, 1997; Myers-Lipton, 1996; Aparicio & Jose-Kampfner, 1995; Fox, 1994) (in each study listed university students of color represented less than 10-15% of the student sample).

Much of this research views service-learning as an opportunity for students "to interact with communities that are unfamiliar to them and to reflect critically upon their experiences and acquire knowledge" with the objective that this experience will "enhance students' personal growth and their individual understanding and competence with respect to the culture or community and their course materials" (Dunlap, 1998, p. 58). In general the literature concludes that the "border-crossing" that occurs in these service-learning experiences significantly impacts students' understanding of white middle-class privilege, offers new ways to think about race-relations, opens up discussions regarding socio-economic and gender inequalities across communities, and provides spaces for increased dialogue and contact across diverse social groups. Indeed, these are all important learning milestones for students who have limited opportunities to interact with people from racially, ethnically and economically different backgrounds.

Community service-learning research, however, has not fully grappled with the multiple contradictions and conflicts that surface in a relationship where students from predominately white middle-class backgrounds engage with communities that are poor and often racially and ethnically diverse (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Raskoff, 1994). Cummings (2000) makes the observation that undergraduate students in service-learning experiences still overwhelmingly participate in "soup kitchens, pound nails with future owners of Habitat for Humanity homes, tutor or mentor in hundreds of schools, yet are rarely to be found doing direct organizing in neighborhoods" (p. 98). In fact, Moeley, McFarland, Miron, Mercer and Ilustre (2002) claim if not properly planned, "service-learning experiences can maintain the [social] power dynamic between white college students and the individuals with whom they work" (p.24).

Many typical community service-learning programs on campuses today face the problem of not being able to attract minority students (Miller & Scott, 2000; Coles, 1999). Coles (1999) develops an analysis of diverse student participation (or lack there of) in service-learning programs and raises some important questions as to why these students may not engage as readily as their white peers in these courses. Her findings include diverse students' work commitments and time limitations, a tradition of service to their own communities outside the university, and their lack of connection to "white establishment" service-learning opportunities as a few factors that may contribute to low participation (p. 98). Coles (1999) found that many students of color were already engaged in service in ethnic organizations (fraternities or student associations) or ethnic social institutions (churches, non-profit organizations or clubs) generally not included in university community service-learning options.

As U.S. university demographics follow national population trends, minority students including immigrant and refugee students are increasingly becoming part of higher education student bodies. At the University of Massachusetts Amherst, the total ALANA (African American, Latino, Asian and Native American) student population doubled between 1990 and 2000 (Office of Institutional Research, University of Massachusetts, 2003)[1]. In 2000 students of color represented 17 percent of the overall university population. Over the past decades the state of Massachusetts has similarly witnessed a marked increase in its foreign-born population (12% of the state's total population is foreign-born). In Western Massachusetts the cities of Amherst, Holyoke

[1] ALANA student statistics include resident alien and immigrant status students. Of the 17% ALANA student population at UMass in 2000 a breakdown of native-born and foreign-born student population was not included. Students are not required to self-report race, ethnicity or immigration status. Foreign-born university students who enter the United States as refugees or immigrants may either be naturalized citizens, permanent residents or residing under refugee immigration status.

and Springfield have become major resettlement sites of Southeast Asian and former Soviet Union refugees and Latino immigrants (Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants, 2002). Despite these demographic shifts, there still exists a lacuna in the research focused on the educational needs of immigrants and refugees students. In particular, little scholarship has been conducted on understanding the experiences of racially and ethnically diverse undergraduate students who participate in service or volunteer programs in higher education. Moreover, little exploration has taken place to see under what conditions CSL experiences and learning benefit the academic and personal experiences of immigrant and refugee students in particular.

The immigrants and refugees settling in the U.S. over the past thirty years increasingly come from diverse national, cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds as compared to previous generations of immigrants from Europe. Of the estimated 33.5 million foreign-born residents living in the U.S. today, 53.3% originate from Latin America, 25.0% from Asia and 8.0% from other regions such as Africa compare to Europe at only 13.7% (Current Population Report: U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). U.S. Census figures clearly show that immigration is changing the racial character of the United States. The majority of today's foreign-born residents, whether immigrant, refugee, political asylum seeker or temporary migrant, originate from developing countries and are racially and ethnically diverse. This phenomena is also reflected on our university campuses today (Szelenyi & Chang, 2002; Vernez, Abrahamse & Quigley, 1996).

A growing number of scholars and educators have criticized present U.S. educational systems, advocating for their reform to enhance the academic experiences of

all students but specifically of racially, ethnically, linguistically, and economically diverse students (Bailey & Weininger, 2000; Giroux, 1997; Shor, 1996; Sleeter, 1996; Gray, Rolph, & Melamid, 1996). These critiques have similarly been applied to present-day higher education community service-learning programs (Arches et al., 1997). In general researchers have questioned the persistent Euro-centric educational perspectives that ignore the culture, knowledge, and experiences of non-European communities of color (Zuniga et al., 2000; Bartolome, 1997; Feagin et al., 1996; Bowser, 1995). Extending this criticism, Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) conclude that educators and educational authorities are not tapping into the resources and strategies of diverse students and their communities. These authors agree that a closer analysis of the cultural bias of instruction, pedagogy, and programming is necessary, along with further research that focuses on the social relations between students, their communities, and the educational institutions that serve them. Finally, these scholars call on universities to provide educators with the opportunities to learn how to incorporate the cultural and strategic resources and assets of their students and their communities into the curriculum and university life.

Equally relevant in reform debates have been the critiques of a highly individualized and competitive instructional system that dominates our institutions and learning systems. For students who come from cultural experiences where social interaction is a developed skill and an expectation, performing academic tasks in an isolated and individualized manner may not be the most academically appropriate or beneficial means of learning (Heath, 1989; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Building peer-learning collectives, in contrast, may be more effective. To foment peer learning

and relationships in academia, however, implies stepping away from the overwhelming focus on individual achievement and merit that most universities promote. This means supporting the concept that learning happens through relational and mediated experiences (Wertsch, 1990; Lave & Wenge, 1991). Cultivating peer relations and culturally relevant group activities through community service-learning challenges traditional Euro-centric models of education and moves away from the highly individual, compartmentalized and competitive norms of higher education. Today, however, the application of collective and culturally appropriate teaching methods, styles, and curriculum is not standard practice in most undergraduate education programs.

By analyzing a community service-learning model that focuses on the experiences of immigrant and refugee undergraduate students working with similar and familiar refugee community youth, I intend to offer an alternative perspective to the field of education in general and community service-learning in particular. Once again, the research questions I answer in this study include:

- In what ways do immigrant and refugee students understand and make meaning of their participation in a service-learning course that engages them with ethnically, racially and culturally similar and familiar refugee youth?
- How do students describe their experiences of learning and working collectively (in peer groups) as mentors and organizers in their community service learning outreach and classroom activities?

- How do refugee and immigrant undergraduate students reflect upon their academic and personal experiences after participating in a community service-learning program that incorporated experiential pedagogy, promoted peer-learning and legitimated students' identities, cultures and communities?

Purpose of the Study

From my review of the literature and various service-learning programs in higher education, I have found that few universities offer diverse students like immigrant and refugee undergraduates the opportunity to engage in service-learning relationships with community partners from similar and familiar socio-cultural, racial, ethnic and economic backgrounds. In addition, the majority of community service-learning research I have assessed has been conducted with white middle-class students interacting with different and unfamiliar communities in their service-learning experiences (Dunlap, 1998). This study questions this dynamic. The purpose of this inquiry is to explore how immigrant and refugee undergraduate students understood their community development experience when engaged in community service learning courses that integrate an ethno-cultural perspective and provide students time and space to reflect and learn with similar and familiar peers and community partners. This study serves as an example for university administrators and educators interested in developing service-learning opportunities on their campuses that attract, interest, and benefit racially and ethnically diverse students.

By analyzing a community service-learning model that focuses on the experiences of immigrant and refugee undergraduate students working with like community youth, I hope to contribute an alternative perspective to the field of

education regarding community service-learning. This study is a descriptive case study that magnifies the potential, ability, and cultural and community know-how of diverse undergraduate students working as mentors, role models, advisors, and contacts in higher education for youth communities from similar cultural and social experiences. This study highlights the narratives and stories of immigrant and refugee students engaged in university community service projects. The artistic (photography) and written expressions (journal and reflection papers) along with the in-depth interviews of ten immigrant and refugee undergraduate students of color comprise the data of this study.

As mentioned earlier, the community service-learning model analyzed in this study looks at the experiences of ten immigrant and refugee undergraduate students of color working as peers, mentors, and organizers with refugee community youth. In this dissertation I am interested in investigating how students understood and described their participation in a community service-learning model that applied experiential and critical pedagogy in the context of immigrant and refugee community development with like ethnic communities. This service-learning approach engaged immigrant and refugee students as peers working with refugee youth to develop collaborative projects centered on youth concerns. Photography and written narratives were a few ways that students and youth decided to portray their collective exploration about family, school, their friends, and their bi-cultural identities. In this study I analyze the participants' narratives to tease out how students tapped into their cultural and strategic resources (funds of knowledge) to develop and execute their community service-learning projects.

To summarize, this dissertation explores how refugee and immigrant undergraduate students understood their experiences in a service-learning course when,

- they were encouraged to build relationships with racially, ethnically, socio-culturally and economically familiar and similar peers and youth across their academic and service-learning experiences
- community service-learning promoted collective or peer group learning between students and community partners.
- students were supported to draw on their cultural and strategic self and community resources (funds of knowledge) as part of their academic and service-learning experiences.

Significance of the Study

Immigration has emerged as one of the key global issues at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The results of the 2000 Census paint a picture of a rapidly changing country with over 85 percent of today's foreign-born population being people of color, from every part of the globe. Most of these newcomers have resettled in the United States over the past three decades. Estimates of the foreign-born population (documented and undocumented immigrants, temporary migrants, refugees and naturalized citizens) in the United States are approximately 32.5 million people (U.S. Census Bureau, Foreign-born Population Report, 2003).

The U.S. educational system has experienced a significant increase in immigrant and refugee (foreign-born) students attending higher education institutions, particularly public state universities (according to NCES statistics approximately 12% of total

undergraduate populations are foreign-born). This population includes both recently arrived newcomers and the immigrant and refugee children of the1980's and 1990's who have turned college and university age (Trent, Owens-Nicholson, Eatman, Burke, Daugherty, & Norman, 2003). The complex experiences that are the threads of identity for this growing university population, however, are little understood by most educators, administrators, staff, and counselors (Bowser, 1995). Research literature demonstrates how institutional structures continue to produce and reproduce Euro-centric models of education despite the increasing diversity and demographic changes that have become the norm in most university settings (Anderson, 2002; King, 1995; Gutek, 1986). Although individual faculty and specific campus programs strive to offer diverse students appropriate academic support, many departments and programs fail to provide educational opportunities that recognize and respect the particular racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identities of their students in the building of community and university life (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Darder, 1992; Gutman, 1994; Bartolome, 1994). Adding to these challenges, diverse university students consistently voice their confusion and concern about their own educational experiences in light of the increased anti-immigrant and anti-affirmative action environments manifest in public and educational discourse and policy (Lesage, Ferber, Storrs & Wong, 2002).

Providing a unique and meaningful university learning environment and community outreach experience for immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and neighboring refugee communities has been the major contribution of CIRCLE. The project coordinators also viewed these educational processes as opportunities to create spaces for systemic and institutional change in typical university and community

relations. This dissertation presents the perspectives of immigrant and refugee students engaged in a distinct form of community service-learning with like ethnic communities. I believe this study contributes to the thinking on community service-learning with diverse student and community populations. This study offers educators, program coordinators, and scholars an analysis of a community service-learning model centered on students' cultural and social experiences and the concrete realities of local refugee communities. These realities were the subject matter for the project's CSL courses and its' outreach versus prescribed academic courses included community service-learning. By inviting students to reflect on their identity in class and utilize their cultural resources when working with community youth, this model valued students as cultural insiders and cross-cultural mediators. Such an approach has significance not only to the community service-learning movement but also to the areas of critical pedagogy and participatory research.

In tandem with highlighting newcomer identity, this model encouraged mentorship and learning in immigrant and refugee peer groups. Students not only learned about immigrant and refugee experiences but they also learned the skills of facilitation, conflict resolution and teambuilding for classroom and community work. As students acquired skills, they were supported to take on facilitation roles during class sessions, lead group meetings and coordinate youth projects in their groups. As peer mentors, students supported each other and set an example of collaboration for the youth they worked with. Hence this approach, as do many CSL models, challenges the isolated, competitive, and individualistic nature of contemporary universities. Instead this model considers a service-learning program or course to be relevant and appropriate

to immigrant and refugee students when it educates and encourages them to become active "builders of their own communities as well as the larger society " (Arches, et al., 1997, p. 10).

Higher education institutions, especially public land grant institutions with their historic mission of service, have much to learn from models like CIRCLE. Despite the emergence of ethnic studies programs, new centers and programs for minority students, diverse faculty appointments, curricular content revisions, and greater pools of financial aid for students of color, campus actors continue to struggle over questions related to diverse knowledge legitimacy and resource allocation. In an era of renewed conservative values where legislative and institutional gains made during the civil rights and equal rights movements are being reversed (Hillard, 2004; Sleeter, 1996), close monitoring and activism are still needed to keep our public institutions in check. As immigrant and refugees steadily constitute growing segments of our educational systems, the lessons learned from past struggles can be applied to the present educational demands of new groups.

Hillard (2004) succinctly points to the relevance of reviewing the civil and educational rights struggles of minority groups as a practice that can inform the present experiences of recent refugee and immigrant groups. The legacy of social and government policy directed at native-born minority communities still affects immigrant and refugee communities today. Feagin (1997) provides a detailed analysis of how the oppressive treatment of Native Americans and enslaved Africans has produced a national "racialized framework of otherness" that has in turn "shaped Euro-American attempts to exclude or oppress" subsequent immigrant groups (p. 22). With the struggles

of diverse communities have come educational reform and institutional change that contest federal and state policies and institutional expectations which often conform to Euro-centric norms (Feagin, 1997).

Assumptions

A profusion of theoretical perspectives and critiques about educational policy, practice, curriculum, and pedagogy provide important frames to view present-day university, community and student relations. Here I focus briefly on a variety of pedagogical perspectives that have informed the way I view education and its implications for diverse student and community learning. These viewpoints have influenced my assumptions and have had an impact on my teaching and the research for this study. I believe that, as an educator committed to social justice, it is imperative to reflect upon one's positions and values as an integral part of any research exercise. I also strongly support the idea that all students can become active, critical, and engaged learners committed to transforming social inequalities and injustices. With this in mind, I coincide with many educators who support approaches that nurture mutual learning outside of the classroom to develop such skills. Through the observation of a problem, conceptualization and definition of the problem, participation and action in an aspect of the problem, and guided critical reflection, these scholars affirm that educators can guide students to become agents of change (Cone & Harris, 1996). Progressive, humanistic and critical pedagogy have all been deeply concerned with students developing critical capacities to reflect, critique, and act to transform the conditions under which they live.

Moreover, I firmly agree that through the reflection on language and action, we can transform habitual thought into what Freire (1970) coined as critical consciousness. Critical consciousness can be defined as learning to perceive social, political, and economic contradictions, taking action against them, and against recreating their oppressive elements. Freire affirms that critical consciousness is also characterized by the recognition that cultural institutions like the university are created and sustained by human purpose and action. Language in turn both shapes and reflects people's perceptions of cultural institutions. By recognizing that institutions and social structures are made by people and can be transformed by people, educators espousing these ideas believe that students, teachers, and community members have the ability to collectively analyze, understand, and in principle modify and transform the social institutions of which we are a part (Shor, 1994). According to Freire (1970), this can only be achieved through "praxis: the action and reflection of men [and women] in the world in order to transform it" (p. 66). Although Freire views institutions of higher education in general as reflections of dominant culture and therefore an instrument of oppression, he acknowledges teachers and small spaces within higher education institutions as possible catalysts and places of change (Deans, 1999).

It was in these small spaces that we, the team of graduate students and faculty in the CIRCLE project, questioned the university's relationship with its immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and its refugee community neighbors. It was also in these spaces that the project authors and later staff began to imagine what it would be like if the history, culture, and experiences of refugee and immigrants students were at the center of educational practice and connected directly to the refugee communities

living only miles away. What would we learn and how would we teach a course that infused community action and service with ethnic, racial, economic and cultural identity?

Our educational agenda was certainly not neutral. It was very intentional and political. Our goal was to cultivate a learning environment that highlighted new forms of knowledge creation and lifted up the multiple histories, identities, and group issues of immigrant and refugee students and their communities. As Bartolome (1994) notes, "working with subordinated students calls for a perception shift- a shift from a narrow and mechanistic view of instruction to one that is broader in scope and takes into consideration the socio-historical and political dimension of education" (p. 176). Central to CIRCLE's mission was the recognition of immigrant and refugee students as cultural insiders and bicultural mediators with unique histories, experiences, and abilities that guide them as leaders (in this case, in their university and service-learning experiences).

I also believe that the "literature" that views educational practice, theory, and institutions as capable of shifting dominant structures played an important role in this research journey. Although the undergraduate students and the community youths in CIRCLE provide the main voices of critical thought throughout this dissertation, it is important that I reflect on the educational perspectives that I believe have shaped the educational choices and directions we took in the project. When I came to graduate school, I was deeply interested in working with groups that promoted collective change and transformation (though I may not have named them as such then). CIRCLE became that space. Freire's crucial elements in the educational process (investigation,

thematization, and problematization) have become the basic principles guiding my teaching and research.

Other educators, scholars, and activists have also influenced my thinking. In this study I take the opportunity to reflect on their language and how their words have shifted my habitual thinking into something more critical. These include situated learning theory, feminist theory, critical pedagogy, anit-racist theory, multicultural education, and immigration theory. Within these discourses, educators are charged with offering students a variety of tools to challenge and change their surroundings. Among these tools stands the opportunity to test their ideas and information in active social situations (Deans, 1999). Because the classroom is in a way a microcosm of society, many theorists claim that it is through action that students and teachers can create spaces to learn how to define problems, reflect on situations, and struggle with real-life solutions and change.

Limitations of the Study

This study examines one alternative community service-learning project with immigrant and refugee undergraduates engaged with neighboring refugee youth. This study is a single case study and does not include a complimentary comparative case. In this sense, this study can not claim to be generalizable to other contexts, though the knowledge and findings generated provide insight to different aspects of higher education and community service-learning in particular. This research project focuses on the experiences of ten immigrant and refugee university undergraduate students engaged in CIRCLE between 1996-1998. While I was involved in the project since its inception

in 1994, I decided to look at this two-year period because of the student cohort at the time (a diverse group of first-generation immigrants and refugees) and the final photography project they produced, "Here I am Now!" Even though the project was reciprocal in nature and worked intensely with the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee youth, this specific study focuses on the undergraduate students rather than the youth they worked with. A subsequent study could explore the meaning community youth participants made of their involvement in the CIRCLE project.

The research for this study is qualitative in nature. I used both ethnographic and case study approaches to conduct the research. The dissertation does not intend to test a hypothesis or seek a quantifiable outcome. Rather this study aims to present findings based on the way students understood their educational experiences in three an alternative CSL project. I achieve this by analyzing students' conversations, activities, and written and visual narratives. A quantitative analysis or test-driven data do not provide measures to interpret students' knowledge or comprehension in this particular experience.

The findings of this dissertation will be of interest to practitioners and educators working with racially and ethnically diverse students and immigrant and refugee undergraduates specifically in community service-learning contexts. From a research perspective, this study contributes a new perspective on how immigrant and refugee students understand and derive meaning from a community service-learning model that engages them with familiar and similar ethnic communities. This study stretches into new territories within the CSL literature as few research examples are available for

comparison or critique (Regmi, 2004). This study provides a detailed account of immigrant and refugee students' relationship with CSL.

Organization of Study

In addition to this introduction, the dissertation contains six chapters. The Chapter 2 presents a contextual background to the study. Here I look at the historical trajectory of the U.S. university, the impact of contemporary immigration trends on higher education and the research context, the response of the University of Massachusetts Amherst to recent trends in refugee and immigrant student and community populations, and, finally, a description of the CIRCLE project. In Chapter 3 I develop the theoretical framework for the study including aspects of experiential and critical learning, situated learning, and the funds of knowledge concept.

Chapter 4 develops an emergent pedagogy for community service-learning that focuses on diverse student populations. Chapter 5 explains the research design and methods of the dissertation. Qualitative research methods frame the study and draw on critical ethnography, the extended case method, in-depth interviews, and participant observation to examine how immigrant and refugee understood their experiences in the CIRCLE. This study looks at this question through three dimensions of the project:

1. the community service-learning relationship between immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and youth from *familiar* and *similar* ethnic communities

2. the collective learning process between *familiar* and *similar* university peers and community youth in the classroom and in the community service-learning experience.
3. the student's individual academic and personal experiences as a result of participating in a CSL course that focused on immigrant and refugee issues.

Chapter 6 discusses the research findings of the study building on various themes that have emerged as a result of an analysis of the data. Chapter 7 concludes the study and discusses its implications for institutional practice. It also offers some suggestions for future research focused on community service-learning with ethnically and racially diverse students.

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXTUAL BACKGROUND

Introduction

> Going to a university where the population of students of color is very small, I was constantly seeing myself as the 'other' and different from everyone else. When I took my first CIRCLE course, I felt as if a mirror were being put up before me to allow me to see things I had never seen before. Undergraduate student reflection paper from CIRCLE

As one of the facilitators and researchers in a series of undergraduate community service-learning courses offered through CIRCLE (Center for Refugee and Immigrant Community Leadership and Empowerment) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, I was continually struck by a common comment that our students made. Students stated that CIRCLE courses and their integrated community service-learning components were the only educational spaces across the five-college campuses in the Amherst, Massachusetts area that dealt with the immigrant and refugee experience and offered students an opportunity to work with local refugee and immigrant communities outside the classroom.[1] Our students showed a consistent interest in and excitement about participating in this type of educational opportunity over sometimes multiple semesters. Their excitement in connection with their intense desire to build a space at the university that reflected their lives and experiences spurred my interest in understanding why students committed themselves to these courses and why there was a lack of comparable learning opportunities at the university.

[1] At the time of this study 1996-1998, the University of Massachusetts at Amherst did not have a formal Asian-American Studies department. Other ethnic studies departments and centers were similarly in their infant stages.

According to Rumbaut and Portes (2001), "new immigration to the United States is unprecedented in its diversity of color, class and cultural origins" (p.1). U.S. Census data estimates 33.5 million foreign-born persons (persons residing in the U.S. who were not American citizens at the time of their birth) reside in the United States, comprising 11.7 % of the country's total population (Current Population Survey, U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Due to the frequent lack of information about students' country of birth, citizenship, and immigration status, comprehensive national data source regarding the exact numbers or descriptions of immigrants attending higher education institutions is difficult to obtain. Nevertheless estimates show that the number of minority, immigrant, and refugee students attending higher education institutions is growing (NCES, 2004; Vernez & Abrahamse, 1996, AACC, 1995). This growing population presents new opportunities and challenges for all universities and plays an important role in diversifying the student body of American educational institutions (Trent, Owens-Nicholson, Eatman, Burke, Daugherty, & Norman, 2003; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002).

Although individual faculty and specific campus programs work toward offering diverse students appropriate academic and community support (Rhoads & Solorzano, 1996), the "challenge of educational institutions lies in finding appropriate ways of responding to the diversity of backgrounds and needs these students represent" (Szelenyi & Chang, 2001, p. 2). Moreover, universities are confronted with the demand to provide educational opportunities that recognize and respect the particular racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identities of all students in the building of community and university life (Portes & Rumbaut, 1990; Darder, 1992; Gutman, 1994; Bartolome, 1994). According to a study conducted by Gray, Rolph, and Melamid (1996), "few institutions regularly

studied trends in immigrant student enrollment, retention, and graduations rates, none had explored whether immigrants were displacing native-born students, and none had asked immigrant students about their needs and perceptions of the campus environment" (p. 105). In conjunction with these challenges, diverse university students continue to voice their concern about their educational experiences in light of, for example, increased neo-conservative, anti-immigrant or anti-affirmative action discourse evident in higher education institutions and educational and government policy.

My primary interest as an educator and doctoral student, however, has been to understand how students understood their experiences in CIRCLE and offer a description of the learning that took place through the alternative pedagogical approaches we applied. Yet as I reviewed my field notes and the data for this study I kept returning to the larger educational context (the university) to better understand the arena in which we were learning. As I began my research, I was confronted with a breadth of literature addressing how institutional structures continue to produce and reproduce Euro-centric models (pedagogy and content) of education despite the increasing diversity and demographic changes that have become the norm at most universities (Lesage, Ferber, Storrs & Wong, 2002).

I also realized that unless I grappled with the complexities of the university where we (those of us engaged in CIRCLE) taught, learned, worked, and built numerous relationships, I would be leaving out a critical component that conditioned our educational experiences. By viewing the literature on higher education and diverse student populations, I believe we can better understand the forces that condition the university and why certain knowledge systems are considered legitimate while others

are not. Such an analysis also sets the stage for proposing curricular alternatives such as the ethno-cultural service-learning model for refugee and immigrant students we developed in CIRCLE and its possible role in shifting Euro-centric educational models within the university. Apple (1990) states,

> For educators to examine the assumptions they have about what education does; presuppositions about science, the nature of men and women, and the ethics and politics of our day-to-day curricular practices, institutions of formal education need to placed back into the larger and unequal society of which they are a part. That is we need to situate the school as institution, the forms of knowledge taught, and the educator back into the context in which they reside. We need to situate these aspects within the nexus of relations of which they are a constructive part. (p. vii)

The perspectives I present in this chapter illuminate the relationships of the university with the diverse communities it serves. This chapter also questions the void of learning opportunities that reflect minority students and, in this particular case, immigrant and refugee student realities.

Specifically, I explore the debates around U.S. universities and their relationship to racially and ethnically diverse student populations. I believe that to understand an institution and to effectively critique it, we must first comprehend that institution's history. Therefore in the first section I provide a brief historical review of the systemic Euro-centric nature of U.S. universities. The second and third sections focus on the university as a system of segregation and the civil and educational rights debates and reform struggles of diverse students and faculty in higher education. Much of this literature is rooted in the experiences and struggles of U.S.-born minorities, African-Americans, Latinos, and Asian- Americans. I concur with many scholars and educators that by understanding this history and research, we build a foundation for addressing the challenges facing immigrant and refugee students and the children of immigrants and

refugees within our educational systems today (Chang, Witt, Jones & Hakuta, 2003; Kiang, 2002; Portes& Rumbaut, 1996).

The fourth section continues with a brief review of the literature that discusses the current climate at present-day universities. The fifth section of this chapter reviews immigration trends and U.S. higher education. The sixth section details the responses of the University of Massachusetts Amherst toward its growing diverse student population. Finally I conclude the chapter with a description of the origins and the educational programming of CIRCLE.

Historical Overview of the Euro-centric University

Micro-spaces like the university campus mirror the realities of society. Although universities are often thought of as liberal, tolerant, and progressive settings that nurture environments of knowledge exchange and equal opportunities to all attending, a very different history has been documented, researched, and debated by scholars, students and faculty, many of whom are students and scholars of color (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996; Padilla, 1997; Kiang, 2000; Lesage, Ferber, Storrs, & Wong, 2003). Reflecting U.S. society in general, Anglo-European perspectives continue to permeate the political, social, and economic structures on university campuses and thus influence student admissions, what type of curriculum is taught, what teaching approaches are applied, and in general what kind of learning takes place (Wong, 1991; Sleeter, 1996).

To better understand the deeply engrained Euro-centric positions and the various forms of discrimination (racism, sexism, classism, and ethnocentrism) manifest in our university structures and curriculum, a brief historical overview is helpful. The origins

of the U.S. university are by and large based on the values and standards of European institutions of higher education. These values and assumptions have virtually remained in place and set the benchmarks by which knowledge and other academic principles are constructed and determined (King, 1995). According to Bonnen (1998), American higher education established during the 17th and 18th centuries mirrored the liberal arts models of Great Britain's Oxford and Cambridge universities. Alluding to Harvard University, the first colonial college established in the U.S. in 1636, Gutek (1986) makes two important points regarding the maintenance of a dominant culture and worldview within the American university system. First, Gutek (1986) states that since colonial times those who have been admitted into the academy to study or teach tend to be members of the economically favored and socially prominent classes. Second, the close interaction between European values and higher education curriculum has continually influenced all aspects of academic life.

Other examples further illuminate the historical ties that universities have to European ideals and values. Johns Hopkins University, the first research university in the United States (1876), was modeled explicitly on the German research university (Borgatta & Montgomery, 2000). Similarly, the commonly applied elective system used in U.S. universities today is based on German university constructs, as are the notions of departments, graduate education, curriculum and faculty organized according to academic disciplines, areas of concentration, library collection, and seminar instruction (Kerr, 1982). King (1995) continues that an "elective system based on departments has been a key factor leading to compartmentalized areas of knowledge and academic arenas

of power and privilege where only a particular few are granted access and given the opportunity to shape further knowledge" (p. 15).

From the latter half of the 19th century on into the 20th century, attempts to change the exclusionary nature of universities began. Nevertheless the outcomes of these policies generally continued to benefit select groups in positions of privilege. The passage of the Morrill land-grant acts in 1862 and 1890 expanded U.S. universities across the board. These funds and initiatives promoted opening higher education opportunities to the general public in areas such as agricultural, mechanical arts and engineering. The Morrill Act is often referred to as a vehicle that shifted American higher education from a private elite system to a more public and democratic one. It is less publicized, however, that the passage of this act provided a direct link between universities, governments, and emerging labor markets. Underlying this rationale was the federal desire to create a common set of training standards as the criteria for developing a substantial white male trained and educated work force (Anderson, 2002).

If we look more closely at the land-grant university- the type of recruitment that took place, the criteria that was used to determine a "qualified applicant", and who was finally admitted- we will find that African Americans, Native Americans, women, and immigrants were largely excluded from attending the university system. Although the Morrill Act provided funding for all states and stipulated that institutions be established for all groups, many southern states, for example, that received federal funds "blatantly refused to establish land-grant universities for Blacks" (Anderson, 2002, p. 7). It was only when the later 1890 Morrill Act stipulated a non-discriminatory clause as a condition for receiving funds that these states began to provide higher education for

African Americans and other minority groups. The majority, however, only provided "teacher-training opportunities and omitted completely any training in agriculture, mechanics, or the sciences" (Anderson, 2002, p.7). In other instances, states established separate colleges for minority groups. Historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs) had been established prior to this enactment in the late 1830's in northern states like Pennsylvania and Ohio as a response to African-American exclusion from higher education. According to Wenglinsky (1997),

> Most Black colleges founded before 1890 were private. Many public colleges for Blacks, however, were founded in response to the Second Morrill Act of 1890. This act provided federal financial support to states to found land-grant colleges. It stipulated, however, that states would either have to provide Blacks with equal access to the land-grant colleges, or establish separate institutions for Black students. Most Southern states chose the latter course, and, between 1890 and 1899, 17 all-Black public colleges were founded. These institutions, in combination with the surviving private ones, became the backbone of Black postsecondary education for the next 60 years; by 1895 they produced 1,100 college graduates yearly. (p. 3)

Bronnen (1998) explains that the land-grant university system (of which the University of Massachusetts Amherst is a part) evolved first as an idea and then as an institutional structure. This development took place over various decades spanning from the end of the 19th on into the beginning of the 20th centuries. According to Bronnen (1998), the land-grant university system today is based on "a set beliefs about the social role of the university" (p. 3). The land-grant university has been primarily "devoted to science and education in the service of society" (Bronnen, 1998, p. 3) as a response to private colleges' and universities' lack of interest in training a professional workforce for industrial society. The areas most developed under the land-grant university include: engineering, public health, agricultural, forestry, and nursing, amongst others. Authors

like Anderson (2002) would argue that Euro-centric values and capitalist ideology are the major beliefs that have driven this institutional vision and ultimately shaped the organizational structure of the land-grant university.

Service and community outreach have traditionally been cited as major components of the land-grant university mission. However, what is actually meant by service and how outreach is executed throughout the system has been less clearly defined by land-grant universities. In fact Bronnen (1998) states that today "land-grant universities, state universities and even private research universities are increasingly alike in their functions and societal roles" (p. 15). Many land-grant institutions view teaching and research as the core services they offer society. In 1999 the Kellogg Commission published their blue-ribbon report, Future of State and Land-Grant Universities, calling on public higher education institutions to shift their notions of service and begin responding to the diverse demographic profiles of their students and connecting student learning to communities. This report alludes to the continued lack of inclusion of higher education's ever growing diverse populations into academic life.

The 1944 GI Bill is also frequently cited as an important example of federal enactments favoring the expansion of university access to diverse communities. According to Lehrman (2003), this legislation fell way short of its mission. While millions of returning World War II veterans and war industry workers became "eligible for low-interest mortgages and free access to higher education, whites benefited most" (p. 1). Federal lending schemes focused their outreach and information efforts on segregated white suburbs. These populations were in turn overwhelmingly preferred as candidates for federal college funding. Critics of the GI bill say that this legislation

made "more acute the already racially biased economic provisions of the time and formed a foundation that has supported white economic advantage to this day" (Lehrman, 2003, p. 2).

The historical formation and maintenance of power relationships and their intersection with education on school and university campuses is an important theme that many authors have developed (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Apple, 1990; Shor, 1996; Aronowitz, 2001). Decisions about what type of education "best" serves a population, who qualifies, and who ultimately attends higher education institutions are intensely political decisions made by a few people in positions of power. Despite university claims that their policies and curriculum are based on neutral egalitarian models, many have evolved from political positions focused on making "Euro-centric knowledge and worldviews the norm and standard" (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996, p. 53). Individual educators and students who make the personal choice to resist the decisions made by educational authorities and to seek out ways to change their teaching and learning situations take a bold political stance. Unfortunately within present educational power structures, these actors are more often than not deemed peripheral, irrelevant, deviant, and irrational. Recognizing and developing the notion of positive and negative forms of power in our cultural and educational settings seems then to be an important part of any discourse that seeks to create democratic change for students on our university campuses. Darder (1996) writes,

> by not challenging or discussing power and by making power an almost taboo theme, Foucault states that social science has failed to perceive power as both positive and negative and as a force that works both on and through people. This negation of power has awarded the dominant culture covert avenues of control with which to determine what is to constitute truth in a given society. Regimes of truth are created where there is a

> circular relation with systems of power that produce and sustain the regime. So to understand the relationship between culture and power, we must also comprehend the dimensions that exist between truth (knowledge) and power. It is an implicit and important assumption drawn from Foucault's work that if schools are to move toward a context of cultural democracy, then it must be recognized that the ability of individuals from different cultural groups to express their cultural truths is clearly related to power that certain groups are able to wield in the social order. Therefore any education theory of cultural democracy must challenge how meanings and values for truth are imposed and perpetuated in schools through the dialectical and social mechanisms of economic and political control found in the society at large. (p. 28)

For generations, educators and policy makers have advocated a Western or "classical" knowledge approach cloaked in "good for all" rhetoric. Heated debates have surfaced when scholars like Darder (1996) challenge these notions. Western rationalist advocates (Bloom, 1987; D'Souza, 1991; Schlessinger, 1992; Bernstein, 1994) claim that core university curriculum is becoming diluted with non-western courses and culture politics. These conservative voices have been joined by the growing political right calling for a back to the basics curriculum at all levels of education. Outcries against feminism, ethnic studies, cultural relativism, and popular culture can be heard over and over again by neo-conservatives who claim that the university has lost its vision of a proper liberal education.

A growing presence of faculty and students from diverse communities has slowly contributed to the development of courses and programs that reflect the lived experiences of the changing population on our university campuses. Projects that advocate relinquishing power and opening territory for new ways of learning and viewing the university experience are the stuff of present and future political struggles on campuses. Tagaki (1998) presents the following as an example,

> the increasing polarized nature of racial politics at the university has set the stage for repeated political confrontation between liberals and their allies, on the one side, and conservatives on the other. In the debate over revamping the core curriculum: at the university for example, minorities, feminists, gays and liberal radicals argued that reading only the classics- was irrelevant to their own social experiences. The guardians of the core, most of whom were white men, insisted that the classics are a necessary part of the diet for a liberal arts education and that, moreover, worthy non-Western philosophy was practically non-existent (p. 3).

A System of Segregation: A Contemporary Concern

The legacy of American higher education's treatment of students of color has been "based on a tradition of segregation and racism" (Powell, 1998, p. 97). Universities across the nation systematically excluded minority groups from being admitted to their institutions or receiving funding to attend (Williams, 2004). It was not until 1954 with the passage of Brown vs. the Board of Education of Topeka that a legal argument enabled African Americans and other minority communities such as Native Americans and immigrants to seek admission to all-White colleges and universities. In effect, university campuses have only been actively recruiting and admitting faculty and students of color since the 1970's, a mere 30 odd years. Even so, in 1970 over 80% of the African American population still graduated from Historical Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUS) or institutions in support of Black education (Anderson, 2002, p. 9). The first evidence of African American student admissions increasing at white universities was presented in the 1971 Newman Report conducted by the Department of Health, Education and Welfare where a 1.4 % overall growth rate (from 5% to 6.5%) in total African American enrollments was noted (Trent, Owens-Nicholson, Eatman, Burke, Daugherty, & Norman, 2003, p. 24). During the 1970's, student of color

representation peaked only to experience a decline in the following decades viewed as a "reactionary backlash surged during the Reagan years" (Bowan & Smith, 2002, p.104). During this same period, Latino and Asian (native and foreign-born) student numbers began to increase across national campuses yet generally never at rates that reflected their overall population numbers (Hurtado, 2002).

The Brown vs. the Board of Education decision on its own has not changed these systemic structures of exclusion. It has taken many years and the coming together of specific social and political movements (civil rights struggles, student unrest internationally, mass migration of African Americans to the north etc.) for shifts in past university admissions policies and practices to be noticed. Many scholars and educators concur that by understanding the history, struggles, and accompanying research of native-born communities of color in higher education, we build a firmer foundation for addressing the challenges facing more recent immigrant and refugee students within our educational systems (Chang, Witt, Jones & Hakuta, 2003; Kiang, 2002; Portes& Rumbaut, 1996). The experiences of native-born communities of color provide critical perspectives from which to understand the social relations of foreign-born communities of color in our public institutions today.

Feagin's (1997) work, for example, offers an important analysis on how the oppressive treatment of Native Americans and enslaved Africans has produced a national "racialized framework of otherness" that in turn "has shaped Euro-American attempts to exclude or oppress" subsequent immigrant groups from social institutions (p. 22). When we view the shared and common educational experiences of racially and ethnically diverse native-born and foreign-born communities within the university

system, we come face-to-face with policies and values that reflect society's construction of race, gender, ethnicity, class culture, and linguistic-ability. These euro-centric policies and values have clearly influenced the university's student and staff demographic make-up, its curriculum content and faculty appointments, to name a few (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Berger & Luckman, 1976).

Most progressive scholars would agree that race is a social construction (as are other social categories such as gender, class and ethnicity) and needs to be understood in its full complexity. However, when it comes to having candid discussions about race, racism, and racial difference in relation to higher education, student access and curriculum development the conversations become more difficult. Many mainstream educators believe in a color-blind argument that claims that society needs to look beyond race and racial difference. People in positions of privilege who rarely interact with the every day experiences of race and race relations have most readily embraced color-blind perspectives.

Rezai-Rashti (1995) discusses the difficulty in getting white mainstream educators to recognize their own biases and move significantly beyond "color-blind" thinking. Students, faculty, and staff of color, on the other hand, understand clearly that race is a determining factor in every aspect of university life far beyond the admissions process (Feagin et al. 1996; Montero-Sieburth, 2000; Cheng & Christensen, 2000). Tagaki (1998), taking a constructivist stance, writes,

> a theme which concerns the historical development and contemporary practices and understandings of race is that race, racism and race relations are central and vital issues, albeit sometimes hidden from plain view, in the discourse of everyday life. (p. 13)

Tagaki (1998) continues with the idea that racism and race relations are complex issues. Any "social and political attempts to confront racism must first manage a theoretical understanding of the complex set of issues regarding identity and difference (pp. 13-14).

Race has also been a central issue in the current debates over affirmative action and has often outweighed the other social categories of gender and national origin that are similarly delineated in the policy. Learning institutions did not one day decide to admit diverse students as a sign of their good will and tolerance. Rather the application of federal policy, like affirmative action, has paved a road of access for communities traditionally excluded from institutions like the university. For clarity I provide a definition of affirmative action according to the Encyclopedia of Sociology,

> a term used since the late 1960's to refer to the policies that go beyond the simple prohibition of discrimination on grounds of race, national origin and sex in employment practice and educational programs and require some further action, "affirmative action" to make jobs and promotions and admissions to educational programs available to individuals from groups that have historically suffered from discrimination in gaining these opportunities or are whether discriminated against or not by formal policies and informal practices, infrequently found in certain occupations or educational institutions and programs (p.47).

Brown vs. the Board of Education (1954) and other federal decisions have attempted to diversify occupational and educational settings with varying degrees of success. The passage of Regents of the University of California vs. Bakke (1978) specifically stipulated that race could be used as a criterion in university admission when considered a "plus factor", a "compelling objective", and one of a number of factors that contribute to a "robust exchange of ideas" for the university (Chang, 2003, p. 4). Heated debates continue to contest the legitimacy of applying such policy measures. Law opponents to affirmative action like Graglia (1993) state, " racial peace will not be found

through policies that enhance racial consciousness, presume the existence of widespread and near-ineradicable racial animosity and insist that racial distinctions are of central importance" (p.152). In contrast, legal proponents of affirmation action agree that their opponents' notions of color-blind meritocracy will never work in U.S society. In fact they state that the only answers to this dilemma are systems that devise and incorporate structures where no community or class is systematically subordinated (Kennedy, 1990).

The questions that the opposition to policies such as affirmative action conjures up for me include who defines merit and who benefits from meritocracy? Kennedy (1990) states that when merit is defined and shaped by institutions that have systematically subordinated particular communities or classes there can be no neutral merit criteria. How is merit being evaluated? If merit is viewed from a university paradigm permeated by Euro-centric values, then won't all students need to perform according to these standards? For the students who are not part of the Anglo-European cultural experience will they not run the risk of being excluded from the system yet again? As the reversals in legislative decisions confirm, race continues to be a theme that many social actors and groups want to shut out or ignore. Critics of affirmative action feel educational policy should be "color-blind" because race is a category, a social construction. These color-blind advocates believe that only neutral, bias-free merit should affect admissions, scholarship, and financial aid decision-making processes. Somehow in their eyes merit and achievement are neutral, objective terrains that are by no means socially constructed.

As diverse communities become more politically active and vocal on our university campuses, so too have the voices of their opponents. The key principles and

policies that promote affording educational opportunities to all members of society through mechanisms like affirmative action, more comprehensive admissions policies, targeted financial aid or greater diversity in course content, teaching methods, and evaluation are systematically under attack despite the fact that these initiatives have directly contributed to the increased presence and success of minority students on university campuses (Chang, 2003; Bowen & Bok, 1998).

Given the 300-year history of exclusion and marginalization of communities of color in this country, it is not surprising that many of the policy initiatives gained over the past forty years have been met with disapproval, controversy, and efforts to discredit and discontinue. In fact, the 1990's bore witness to unprecedented opposition to measures such as affirmative action, pro-immigration policy and multiculturalism. The diversity rationale of the University of California vs. Bakke (1978) decision that allows colleges and universities to take race and ethnic origin into account in the admissions process has been called into question and actually reversed in the California Proposition 209 (1998) and Hopwood vs. Texas (1996) state decisions. These legislative reversals were fueled by popular sentiment proclaiming that merit versus race or other social categories should determine student admissions. The University of Michigan and the University of Texas have also upheld similar decisions and Texas A&M University just recently (December 2003) decided against using affirmative action in their admissions process (N.Y. Times, January, 13, 2004).

Similar legislative reversals that previously supported the rights of diverse groups have also been passed. These include the 1996 Immigration Reform Act (IIRAIRA) and Welfare Reform Act together with other back-to-the-basics campaigns

that have set the stage for much higher education debate (Takagi, 1998; Chang, Witt, Jones & Hakuta, 2003). Sleeter(1995) writes,

> In the 1990's many rollbacks of the gains made during the civil rights movement took place. Affirmative action as well as funding for social programs are under attack. Immigrants are increasingly vilified and denied services as well as legitimacy of the cultures and languages they bring; homelessness is being legislated as a crime rather than a symptom of insufficient jobs and affordable housing; and welfare recipients are subject to escalating hatred. In addition, public education at all levels is being cut Conservative justification for increased racial and social class stratification is becoming increasingly popular, including justification on the basis of genetic grounds (p.15)

In spite of the disputes, recent "social, political, economic events, legal and legislative challenges and, more importantly, demographic shifts have forever changed the landscape of American higher education" (Powell, 1998, p.96). Traditional all-White college campuses are indeed becoming more ethnically, racially, culturally, linguistically, gender, and class diverse. Many questions facing higher education coincide precisely with the struggles emerging from the complex relations amongst a more diverse student and faculty body. So, contrary to the desire of neo-conservatives to keep the university locked in a Euro-centric grip, some gain can be seen in the enrollment of students and hiring of faculty of color as well as a growing support of diverse curriculum and ethnic or feminist studies programs. Multiple learning environments and opportunities versus a singular dominant culture approach are being applied more and more by scholars and educators in their classrooms and curriculum. These approaches, in turn, are slowly becoming accepted across different sectors of the university

The changing demographics on and off university campuses together with the mobilization of communities of color add to the multiple identities and notions of

difference on university campuses today. These constituencies, like the ones in this study, have amplified their demand for the right to access, admission, funding and specific programming at universities nationally. These demands have in turn led to a shift in the kind of research that takes place regarding students' experiences in higher education. Moreover, this research is gaining legitimacy within the academy. Studies on race, identity, refugee and immigration related concerns, and diversity in higher education have similarly expanded. Indeed more and more research in these fields is pointing out the benefits that federal policies like affirmative action have had on universities. In fact this research illustrates the negative impact on universities (research, student and faculty composition, diverse student population, course content etc.) when diversity mechanisms are withdrawn and segregated systems are allowed to persist (Chang et al. 2003; Bowen & Smith, 2002; Anderson, 2002; ACE report, 2000).

Reform within the Euro-centric System

Scholars and policy analysts frequently refer to the following areas as sectors in need of focused university level reform. These include: recruitment through graduation support for ethnically and racially diverse students, greater incentives for faculty to change or develop new and diverse curriculum, greater percentages of faculty of color in tenured positions, opportunities for authentic interactions across diverse communities, university-community partnerships that connect the institution and its research agendas to local communities, and overall organizational and administrative re-structuring, to name a few (Valverde & Castenell, 1998; Feagin et al., 1996; Maurrasse, 2001). Bowser (1995) expands on the reform debate stating that in order,

> to move away from a Euro-centric university an organizational framework for the university is needed that will allow and advance holistic worldviews as suggested in the African and American Indian perspectives. Within such a framework other cultural perspectives will be intrinsic to the course and its purpose rather than just add-ons or interesting digressions form the main point. A theme such as social justice or economic prosperity could be the basis of reading a period's history along with literature, languages, philosophy and anthropology. This would allow more holistic comparison and contrast between historical developments in Europe, Africa and Asia. (p. 47)

In addition, Rosaldo (1989), in Culture and Truth, calls for a diverse membership as a way to begin the political act of democratizing the university. He claims that,

> changes in institutional norms, curricula and pedagogies appear crucial for democratizing educational institutions over the coming decades. In order to democratize higher education, people need to work together to change the present situation where the higher the perceived social status in the room the less diverse its membership. When people leave a decision-making room and no one hears about how consensus was reached, remember to ask "Who was in the room when the decision was made?" Introducing diversity in such rooms will slow down the process. Decisions will be harder to reach and the process will be less comfortable than via the old method, but the decision made will find broad support and prove more effective in the long run (p. xi-xii).

Universities have generally focused on increasing the enrollment numbers of racially and ethnically diverse students on campus, referred to as structural diversity. They have been much slower at proactively engaging in other key dimensions of diversity such as diversity-related initiatives (cross-cultural workshops and ethnic studies courses) and diverse interactions (meaningful exchanges with and across diverse students, ideas and information) (Milem, 2003, p. 134). Hurtado (2002) draws our attention to the "interconnected dimensions of history, representation, perceptions and behavior that may help institutions to identify specific areas for improvement" (p. 132). Her research highlights the need to clearly understand that students are educated in distinct "racial contexts influenced by external and internal forces that in turn condition

the climate of diversity for ethnically and racially diverse students" (Hurtado, 2002, p. 128).

Beyond increasing the enrollment of students and hiring of faculty of color, researchers have found that the growing support for diverse programs and courses such as ethnic or feminist studies and the application of diverse learning methods and opportunities versus singular dominant culture approaches in their classrooms have positively effected ethnically and racially diverse students (Hurtado, 2002; Milem, 2003). As diverse learning approaches and curricular content have slowly become accepted throughout different sectors of the university, research is finding that they have had positive effects on the overall student population of the university (Milem, 2003).

In a study conducted by the American Council on Education (2000) on diversity in the college classroom, many higher education faculty members and administrators were "deeply concerned that the abandonment of race-sensitive admissions and hiring, at a time when most minority groups continue to be underrepresented in higher education, would severely limit campus diversity and would undermine the learning environment of all students" (p. 2). As a reflection of these concerns, the ACE study focused on the actual educational impact of racial and ethnic diversity on the learning environments of the university. The researchers looked at whether and how diversity influences teaching methods, course content, learning environment, and overall academic quality. The conclusions of the study coincide with existing scholarship "that racial and ethnic diversity has both direct and indirect positive effects on the educational outcomes and experiences of all college students" (p.3). More than 90% of the faculty members interviewed indicated that a diverse classroom environment "diminishes neither student

quality nor intellectual substance" (p. 4). In addition the study found that most faculty surveyed strongly believe that "racially and ethnically diverse classrooms enrich the educational experience of white students" (p. 4).

Given such findings, one would think that the diversity question would be a less controversial topic. Yet as I have developed in the previous sections of this chapter, the maintenance of a dominant structure within social institutions is dependent on systems that sort, classify, and relegate specific roles to specific participants in order to reproduce and sustain the power of the elite group. In a sense, the growing diversity on campuses today creates tension as it forces dominant groups to face the contradictory nature of the educational system. Labaree (1997) has developed a helpful analysis in understanding these contradictions. He writes,

> Grounded in a contradictory social context (democratic politics vs. capitalist markets, public vs. private, majority control vs. individual liberty, political equality and social inequality), the history of American education has been a tale of ambivalent goals and muddled outcomes. Like other major institutions in American society, education has come to be defined as an arena that simultaneously promotes equality and adapts to inequality. With schools these contradictory purposes have translated into 3 distinguishable educational goals, each of which has exerted considerable impact without succeeding in eliminating the others and each of which has at times served to undermine the others. I call these goals: *democratic equality, social efficiency,* and *social mobility*. The first two seek public goods and the last is private. The first is mainly a public good seeking to educate youth to become responsible citizens. The second looks to schools as a public good for the private sector, or to prepare youth to be producers in society. The last is the stance of the student as consumer and where the school system is set up as a market place and education as a commodity (p. 35).

Labaree's thesis points out that democratic equality, social efficiency, and social mobility have interacted, conflicted, and undermined each other throughout history. Labaree asserts that the most significant problem in education today is the growing

dominance of the third goal, education as a commodity. Public education has increasingly come to be perceived as a private good that can be harnessed by a few in pursuit of their personal advantage. Despite the evidence that diversity benefits educational programs, Labaree concludes that educational systems opt to continue sorting, categorizing, and excluding specific communities in order to advance a selected and privileged few.

Bell's (1980) theory of interest-convergence makes a powerful yet more pessimistic argument that the treatment of people of color in the United States has improved and will improve only when it is in the interest of the white majority. Bell uses the Brown vs. Board of Education case as an example. Bell (1980) claims that it was only when the white majority "saw," or were embarrassed enough to see, diverse university and school campuses as beneficial, did educators, administrators, policy makers, and white students and community members begin to change the way things were. Today these majority numbers are shifting. Demographic projections show that communities of color will become the national majority in 2050. A major challenge in higher education today is upholding gained policy measures, such as affirmative action, and alternative spaces and curriculum that grant diverse communities an equal playing field while forging forward with new policies for equity and diversity.

Giroux (1997) cautions us that economically deterministic or social reproduction arguments can spiral into a sense of hopelessness. Giroux stresses instead that educators and students have agency and can change their institutions. He states that,

> as public intellectuals, university educators must bring to bear in their classrooms and other pedagogical sites the courage, analytical tools, moral vision, time and dedication required to return universities to their most important task: creating a public sphere in which citizens are able to

> exercise power over their own lives and especially over the conditions of knowledge acquisition. Central to any such effort is the recognition that democracy is not a set of formal rules for participation but rather based on the lived experience of empowerment for the majority (Giroux, 1997, p. 268).

Padilla (1997) emphasizes that as university educators, it is our duty to be critical and engage with critical material so that students can "appreciate the extraordinary wisdom which can be generated from understanding the dialectical relationship between hope and critical knowledge" (p.5). Padilla asserts that, without understanding the special union that exists between hope and critical knowledge, it is virtually impossible to engage in activities where students can "interrogate their own politics in their roles as university students" and

> build their understanding of civic responsibility to be critical human agents while attending an institution where information or knowledge is presented in fragments of unrelated facts or divorced from the contexts where they were produced. (p. 6)

Padilla continues this thought by writing that "students can develop the ability to make linkages between their own body of knowledge and the social, cultural, political and economic realities that inform and sustain this knowledge." It is "through a critical perspective that students can finally develop a coherent, holistic understanding of themselves, connecting the self to the social world" (p. 7).

Beyond using powerful quotes, Padilla's "duty to be critical" is about educators' motivations to find and use critical material, narratives, political examples, counter-histories, first-person documents and international/outside perspectives that bring critical ideas to life in our classroom discussions and readings. Rather than toting fancy terminology, Padilla (1997) calls on pedagogues to integrate student experiences that offer alternative perspectives. Padilla uses a poem written by an urban fifth grader about

the street she lives on. Through this poem, he discusses complex concepts of critical knowledge, social disparities, and hope in a way that makes sense to students and can be applied to their academic experience.

Shifting attitudes, diversifying constituencies, and adding new courses or centers are only a beginning. hooks (1994) asserts that "a rethinking of knowledge systems, a deconstruction of old epistemologies and the concomitant demand for transformation in the classrooms of the academy" (p. 29) must play a central role in the university agenda. Rather than framing these goals merely in a university mission statement, universities are being encouraged to put their mission statements in action. Institutional transformation can only happen when diverse student and faculty spaces and voices are supported and promoted throughout the academy including a respect, acknowledgement, and incorporation of diverse people's culture and expertise (Wong, 1991; Justiz, Wilson & Bjork, 1994).

Many researchers call on teachers to understand the history of their students and educational institutions. Of particular importance is understanding how and why schools and universities have perpetuated particular interests at the expense of and exclusion of others. In order to fully understand these dynamics, it is critical to listen to the stories of the diverse members of our learning communities and work toward authentically incorporating their demands for organizational and curricular change (Fegin, 1997; Giroux, 1996). In the chapters that follow I will refer to some of educational examples that diverse and minority faculty and students have explored. Bartolome (1994) promotes the idea that "working with subordinated students calls for a perception shift- a shift from a narrow and mechanistic view of instruction to one that is broader in scope

and takes into consideration the socio-historical and political dimension of education" (p. 176). Mitchell and Feagin's (1995) work further crystallizes this argument,

> the ultimate problem of U.S. educational institutions and U.S. society is the failure to integrate non-Europeans into core institutions on non-European terms. If Americans of color are to thrive and prosper, the dominant white, mostly north European American culture itself must be radically changed to recognize the major contributions already made by and the validity of the critiques offered by, America's diverse peoples of color. (p. 84)

I believe reading and engaging with this literature is important because it beckons educators to evolve, search, stretch themselves, develop new passions, and look toward critical horizons that move in the direction of institutional and social change. These seem to be the essential elements on the teacher side of the equation in the transformation of our educational institutions. The literature I have reviewed implies taking risks, looking beyond the usual, looking inside ourselves, listening to conversations we usually miss, engaging with people who we generally don't reach out to. Although a daunting list, to paraphrase Gramci (1971), if we as teachers, see ourselves as intellectuals committed to creating an alternative collective will, we must be bold and take these risks. Welch (1990) similarly invites us to move from an ethic of control, where one way of doing things is seen as the norm, to an ethic of risk that relies on respect and a willingness to work with rather than for others.

Climate at the University: Student and Faculty Diversity

In spite of the controversy over and gaps in admissions policies, educational goals, learning environments etc., hundreds of colleges and universities recognize the educational value of diversity and view student and faculty diversity as an essential

resource for optimizing teaching and learning. Moreover, even in the shadows of the ever-present legal challenges that attempt to abandon race, gender and national origin-sensitive admissions policies, many universities and educators stand firm on creating institutional environments that support educating students for a "diverse society where all students benefit and where students from diverse backgrounds are genuine assets" (Marin, 2000, p.61). Still it is critical that we probe into the multiple dimensions of present-day university climates. What is written in a university mission statement or statement of purpose is often quite different from the actual climate experienced by students and, in particular, ethnically and racially diverse students and the impact this has on their education. Hurtado (2002) writes, "studies have confirmed that the climate for diversity is not intangible and subjective but has real impact and consequences for a variety of racial/ethnic groups in college" (p.131).

In Gudeman's (2000) study on college missions, faculty teaching and student outcomes, the author concluded that, of the 30 liberal arts colleges she reviewed, the majority included "learning perspectives from diversity" and "gaining an increased capacity for tolerance, respect and concern for others" as key values and principles that their institutions were striving towards. Gudeman then looked at a specific liberal arts college that has historically sought to admit ethnically and racially diverse students. The researcher found that in two thirds of its college courses, students of color were often the only minority student in the class. Hence the author concludes that although the college mission was progressive, its faculty strongly believed in the benefits of diversity for the institution and provided ample multicultural material and perspectives in the classroom, classes with no or only one student of color were unable to develop an interactive

environment of exchange and dialogue that complimented the university's mission. This dilemma relates not only to the number of students enrolled at this college but also to the distribution of students based on the overall college population, number of courses offered, and classroom size criteria. This scenario is not unique to only a few liberal arts college. In fact, Gudeman (2000) states that this phenomenon is characteristic of classes of 15 to 25 students at all colleges and universities with minority student populations less than 15% regardless of enrollment (p. 52). As to the impact on students and the environment, the author states that the,

> cost to students of color from historically undervalued groups who are alone in the classroom may be even greater. Social psychologists have found that being a solo minority in a group can have negative consequences. A solo is more likely to objectified and treated as representative of a category than as a unique person. When a person is solo or part of a very small minority, then both she and majority others are more likely to perceive her participation as either anomalous or discrepant and to overemphasize racial difference when perceiving and assessing the "other." (Gudemann, 2000, p. 51)

Hurtado's (2002) work focuses on the various levels of diverse student needs and what the university must consider in order to attract and retain minority students of color. Hurtado writes that students from diverse backgrounds,

> need opportunities to interact with others when diversity is an issue. Such interactions enable students to work through differing perspectives and discover common values. At the same time students need to interact among themselves to reinforce the development of identity, to revitalize important cultural values and to maintain a comfort zone that buffers them when they encounter culturally insensitive students. (p.130)

Hurtado touches on the problem that students of color are often pushed to represent their whole social group. She also stresses the need for educators and university administrations to provide safe spaces of learning, especially for ethnically and racially

diverse students who run the risk of becoming the diversity representative in their class or department.

Hurtado (2002) also places importance on the educational concept of assessing student's needs and developing programs and curriculum based on the cultures of the communities on our college campuses. Hurtado believes that if executed properly all student voices would be represented in the programs, curriculum and campus activities. This approach would increase a sense of belonging amongst students while minimizing the spotlight approach on a particular diverse student(s) or maintaining the experience of Anglo-European students as the norm. For the researcher, this pedagogical and institutional approach is critical for it facilitates "students' transition to college and their sense of belonging [which] are both directly associated with having a satisfying college experience and persistence to graduation" (Hurtado, 2002, p. 132). Hurtado (2002) adds, " institutions need to begin to foster a student-centered philosophy among faculty and staff that will result in transforming practices" (p.133). To complement this call, Powell's (1998) comprehensive enrollment management strategy frames a more diverse and integrated campus as one that seeks to create an environment with diverse student culture at its core. This approach focuses on the recruitment, admission, retention, and graduation of students of color. According to Powell (1998),

> one of the most important planks in this strategy is to create campus environments that reflect the cultural heterogeneity within and create a learning community where students are treated with respect and helped to succeed. (p. 109)

As to the question of diverse faculty, Trueba (1998), then senior vice president of Academic Affairs at the University of Houston, writes,

> judging from the current sentiment in academia, one cannot assume that in the near future there will be serious change toward a fair representation of minority faculty. Most strategies adopted in the name of affirmative action, equity, curriculum reform, competitiveness in the college market for minority students or for political expediency have failed to produce sustained gains in the numbers of tenured Latino or African American faculty. (p. 76)

Trueba (1998) reflects on his own 30-year experience in U.S. academia as the basis for his conclusions. Despite this bleak overview, Trueba offers a series of recommendations to remedy the problems he sees. He states that the time has come to "invest seriously, consistently and substantially in intellectual and material resources to create a strong pool of underrepresented minority faculty who can take university positions in administration, research, and instruction and can demonstrate a level of performance above that of mainstream faculty" (p.92). He also calls on provost offices to:

> sponsor academic initiatives promoting diversity, provide incentives to academic units to recruit and retain students, staff and faculty of color, reward the achievements of faculty of color in the promotion and tenure process and make deans and directors accountable for the quality of life in their units with regard to fostering diversity. And finally install a well-organized pipeline between the university and the schools that serve diverse populations. (p.70)

In the first comprehensive nationwide survey of faculty members' attitudes towards diversity at their institutions and in their classrooms, Maruyama and Moreno (2000) found that student and faculty diversity had not led the faculty majority to make many changes in their classroom practices. Only about one fourth of the faculty in the survey stated that they changed their teaching methods to encourage discussion in their classes, and one in five reported developing new courses (pp. 16-17). These outcomes further support Hurtado's (2002) call to rethink curricular practices that create new learning climates in our classrooms and institutions and Trueba's (1998)

recommendation to the provost's office to sponsor initiatives that promote diversity and provide incentives to academic units. Marin's (2000) research found, however, that "faculty members who recognize and use diversity as an educational tool, include content related to diversity into their courses, employ active learning methods and create an inclusive and supportive classroom climate can and do produce enhanced educational outcomes in classes comprising a racial and ethnic mix of students" (ACE report, p.5). In addition, Marin concluded that, the more faculty members and students "experience multi-racial and multi-ethnic interactive classrooms, the more prepared they are to teach and interact in similar classrooms" (ACE report, p.5).

Maruyama and Moreno's study (2000) showed that faculty who spent more class time engaged in teacher and student-shared responsibility and student-centered activities saw fewer negative effects of diversity and responded more favorably regarding positive effects of diversity on classes, students and research (p.22). The overall findings of their study indicate that there are good educational reasons for universities to recruit and admit a diverse student and faculty population. Faculty agreed that "diversity in the institution helps all students achieve the essential goals of a college education" (p. 4). Therefore, the attitudes of faculty and administrators toward diversity and the incorporation of educational content from multiple perspectives seem to be key elements in creating a climate that affirms the presence, history, culture, and knowledge of diverse students.

Greater racially and ethnically diverse student, faculty and administration representation, the creation of diverse programs or department area studies, and supportive student centers, are only some of the areas that the literature speaks to in

terms of creating a more inclusive and just environment for the changing populations on university campuses today. To put into practice the social justice and educational missions of most higher education institutions requires a shift in pedagogy, knowledge creation, and institutional organization. I believe this literature review has offered explanations to our students' opening question: Why is that the CIRCLE project and its integrated community service-learning components were the only educational spaces across the five-college campuses in the Amherst, Massachusetts area that dealt with the immigrant and refugee experience and offered students an opportunity to work with local refugee and immigrant communities outside the classroom? In the following section, I continue with a look at national immigration trends and higher education, the responses of the University of Massachusetts Amherst to its growing diverse communities, and an overview of the CIRCLE project.

Recent Immigration Trends and Higher Education

Immigration has emerged as one of the key global issues at the beginning of the twenty-first century. The results of the 2000 United States Census paint a picture of a rapidly changing country. Passel (2001) estimates that immigrants have almost doubled their share of the U.S. population since 1970. Eighty-five percent of today's immigrants are people of color, from diverse national, cultural, racial, ethnic, and religious backgrounds. Of the estimated 33.5 million foreign-born residents living in the U.S. today, 53.3% originate from Latin America, 25.0% from Asia and 8.0% from other regions such as Africa as compared to Europe (13.7%) (Current Population Report: U.S. Census Bureau, 2003). Immigration data shows California, New York, Florida, Texas,

New Jersey, and Illinois as the states leading in total immigrant households. Massachusetts, the site of this study, has traditionally ranked as one of the top ten states in terms of refugee and immigrant settlement. According to recent state census information, the foreign-born population in Massachusetts is 10-16% of the overall state population. (U.S. Census Bureau, 2000).

According to U.S. law, an immigrant is a foreign-born individual who has been admitted to reside permanently in the United States as a lawful permanent resident (LPR). Other foreign-born residents may be living in the United States as undocumented immigrants or non-immigrants (students or temporary workers). The majority of immigrants residing in the U.S. are lawful permanent residents. A refugee is a person who seeks protection outside of the United States on the grounds of fear of persecution in that person's homeland. To obtain refugee status, a person must prove that he or she has a "well-founded fear of persecution on the basis of at least one of five specifically-enumerated and internationally-recognized grounds: the person's race, religion, membership in a social group, political opinion, or national origin" (U.S State Department, Office or Refugee Resettlement). A foreign national seeking refuge for similar reasons within the United States is referred to as an asylum seeker. In this study I use the legal and sociological definitions of immigrant and refugee (foreign-born and considered first-generation).

For educators the significant increase in and diversity of immigrant and refugee students has had an important impact on the schools, universities, and classrooms where we teach (NCES, 2004; Szelenyi & Chang, 2002; Vernez, Abrahamse & Quigley, 1996). The debates over immigration related to education and public services have been as

heated as the debates over affirmative action. On the one hand, educators, community organizers, ethnic organizations and national organizations, such as the National Immigration Forum or Center for Migration Studies, view the diversity of our communities through immigration as a reflection of our history and an asset to the nation. Despite the challenges and the need to reform, rethink curriculum and restructure services, this sector believes strongly in the virtues of a multicultural society based on immigration.

On another front are the national groups such as FAIR (Federation of American Immigration Reform) and the Center for Immigration Studies. Together with various state and local officials and average citizens, these organizations believe that open immigration policies are detrimental to the U.S. economy and its social and political institutions. These groups have gone to great lengths to lobby in Congress against increased immigration and any legislation that supports education, employment, or social service benefits to the foreign-born. In fact many of these groups systematically develop anti-immigrant campaigns on local radio, television, and in the press, building on the myths that immigrants are taking employment opportunities away from native-born Americans, overcrowding our schools, and depleting our social security coffers.

I believe reflecting on immigration and how it has historically been viewed provides additional vantage points to view this higher education debate. The immigrant and refugee experience is a fundamental yet contradictory part of the American "story". The phrase, "we are a land of immigrants", is recited by politicians, corporate executives, community leaders, and educators to conjure up a past full of hopes, dreams, hard work and success. Immigration is often said to be the fabric this country is made

of. While this image captures a slice of refugee and immigrant experience in the U.S., it is certainly not a complete description. Nevertheless this snapshot has become a part of our national discourse, an attempt to portray the collective immigrant experience as a multicultural foundation shared by all people living in the United States. Rarely, however, do our leaders or politicians couple this image with the notions of struggle, injustice, poverty, violence, and exclusion that historically accompany the immigrant and refugee journey.

Census figures clearly show that immigration is changing the racial character of the United States. The majority of today's foreign-born residents, whether immigrant, refugee, political asylum seeker or skilled professional, originate from developing countries and are racially and ethnically diverse. With the majority of new immigrants and refugees fitting into Asian, Latino, and African categories, questions of race, ethnicity, and language in the United States become ever more complex. Recent foreign-born residents are generally viewed by and incorporated into mainstream America, Census information, and other social and government entities as non-Whites. Scholarly work that concentrates on immigrants of color shows that, despite generations-long presence in the United States, many residents are still perceived by the mainstream as "foreign", an image that has become "a fundamental racial characteristic" (Sanchez, 2000, p. 56) in describing recent immigrant and refugee groups. These scholars claim race to be a key factor in the differing experiences of recent immigrant and refugee incorporation into U.S. social institutions, like the public university, as compared to past European cohorts (Lowe, 1996; Gotanda, 1997; Chavez, 1997).

Research on previous European immigrant groups has generally taken a straight-line approach claiming that newcomers gradually assimilated into (white) American society and its social institutions (Gordon, 1964). Not readily highlighted in this research are the many structural conditions, combined with the shifting and emerging realities of immigrant life, that condition the opportunities and constraints of newcomers in the host country (Kibria, 1993; Davidson, 1996). Omi and Winant (1986) point out that past models of adaptation considered race a peripheral issue and neglected any exploration of race and race relations in the immigration process.

Sanchez (2000) writes, "race has played and continues to play a critical role in facilitating the adaptation of certain European newcomers to American society" (p. 55). With the rise of "whiteness" studies in the 1990's, Sanchez (2000) and other authors demonstrate "that part of the integration of European immigrants and their descendants into American mainstream has been their positioning as 'white' as opposed to 'black' (p. 54). Delgado (1997) argues that,

> in the United States the "current community"- the institutions that regulate immigration policy and interact with immigrants- is deeply affected by racism and exclusionary practices. He states, for much of our history a national-origin quota system and, before that, anti-Asian and anti-Mexican laws kept immigrants of color low. We denied immigration and travel visas to communists and others espousing ideologies deemed dangerous. Literacy and English-speaking requirements cut down the number of immigrants from areas other than northern Europe. And round-ups, *Bracero* Programs, English-only laws and the panoply of nativist measures made things difficult for immigrants from disfavored countries once they were here. For much of our history, women and blacks were denied the right to vote or hold office. Higher education was virtually closed to both until about 1960 and in Southern states, Black Codes made it a crime to teach a black to read. "The community", then, is deeply shaped by racism, sexism, and xenophobia. This is not only in terms of its demography and makeup but also its preferences and values. Handing such a community the keys to determine immigration policy is a recipe for self-replication and stasis (p. 321).

Contemporary sociological models looking at immigrant and refugee adaptation and incorporation now take into account the multitude of conditions that bring newcomers to this country. At the same time they consider the many processes that influence immigrant and refugee adaptation into and their shaping of the host society. Research has begun to demonstrate how groups like the 1.5-generation (immigrants and refugees who arrive as children) and children of immigrants incorporate and influence U.S. society in different ways. By teasing out and analyzing factors like class, race, gender, U.S. political relations with country of origin, area of resettlement-urban/rural, labor market incorporation, ethnic community networks and institutions, parent education levels etc., scholars have been able to view immigration in its complexity versus through linear approaches (Zhou, 1997; Portes & Rumbaut, 1996; Waldinger & Feliciano, 2003). Despite the many factors and nuances influencing each newcomer group, Sanchez (2000) asserts "race is likely to continue to emerge as a fundamental source of contention in analyzing immigrant adaptation to the United States, given the long history of racial discrimination in the country and the continued racialization of newcomers in contemporary American politics" (p. 57).

Evidence of this practice has been reported by the National Network for Immigrant and Refugee Rights (2000),

> immigrants in the U.S. face a rising tide of racial discrimination because of the color of their skin, accent, or national origin. In addition, those who are perceived to 'look like immigrants', including U.S.-born people of color are subjected to the double blows of racism and xenophobia. (NNIRR executive summary, p. 1)

With the majority of post-1965 immigrant and refugee cohorts being of non-European origin, we can see how their experiences overlap and intersect with those of native-born

communities of color as they interact with U.S. social institutions. I believe the documented interactions and struggles of foreign-born and native-born communities of color with social institutions can inform our understanding about the changes needed in the U.S. educational system. Hillard (2004), a history professor at Georgia State University, recently wrote in The Nation,

> *Brown vs. Board of Education* was mainly about black and white. Now a rainbow of other ethnic groups has arrived to share in the "savage inequalities" that persist. This presents major challenges, conceptual and structural, calling for a whole new resolve, and resources to provide truly equal opportunities to learn. Though Mexican, Hmong, Chaldean, Haitian and other immigrants and their children may not have experienced the pre-*Brown* or even the post-*Brown* apartheid, they do experience the residual effects of segregation structures, such as the white-supremacy ideologies that foster low expectations, low support commitment, alien and remote school leadership and detrimental school practices. (p. 7)

Hillard (2004) succinctly points to the relevance of reviewing the civil and educational rights struggles of native-born minority groups as a practice that can inform the present experiences of recent refugee and immigrant groups. The legacy of social and government policy directed at native-born minority communities still affects immigrant and refugee communities today.

Prior to 1965, U.S immigration policy restricted most Asian, Latin American, and African nationals from entering the United States. After 1965 significant immigration policy reforms focused on family reunification and occupational qualifications rather than national origin as the key criteria for admission to the U.S. As a result, U.S. residents can sponsor foreign-born family members through the family reunification route of immigration policy. This policy change created the conditions for skilled and unskilled workers from countries traditionally excluded from entering the U.S. to fulfill nation labor demands. Equally important to the increase in the U.S.

foreign-born population are the political situations that shifted the historical barring of non-European refugee groups to resettle in the U.S. For example the U.S. government expanded its admission quotas of refugees from Cuba, Vietnam, Cambodia, and Laos, and later the Former Soviet Union based on U.S. government foreign policy interests.

The magnitude of immigration to the U.S. over the past decades, combined with the fact that the majority of newcomers are of non-European national origin, has attributed to increased student diversity at U.S. schools and universities. As young immigrants and the children of immigrants come of age, they logically seek out higher educational opportunities. According to a study conducted by Vernez, Abrahamse and Quigley (1996) the number of immigrant children and youths in American schools, colleges, and universities has increased at a record rate over the past 20 years, and these numbers are expected to continue in the years to come. These authors posit that the number of immigrants, in combination with the children of immigrants born in the United States, is "changing the racial and ethnic composition of the student body" across the country (Vernez et al., 1996, p.63). This study showed that immigrants as a whole were as likely as native-born to graduate from high school. As high school graduates, immigrants were actually more likely to pursue a college education than their native counterparts. Despite the extreme constraints that immigrant families often face in sending their youngsters to college, this study found educational aspirations and family networks to be key factors in these outcomes.

Contrary to the overall educational outcomes for the combined immigrant groups included in their study, Vernez et al. (1996) point out that when we begin to look at each immigrant group separately and then examine the complexities within each (i.e.,

racial/ethnic composition, poverty rates, immigration status, level of education of student and parents, etc.), a very different portrait emerges. Portes and Rumbaut (1996) claim that the heterogeneous educational backgrounds of the foreign-born are not readily interpreted. These authors take the position that an array of factors need to be analyzed in order to thoroughly understand the educational experiences of immigrants in their countries of origin and destination, the immigration policy and labor demands in the receiving country, and immigrant and refugee incorporation into the host society.

Teasing out diverse data across race, gender, economic, social and immigration status is critical in gaining a clearer understanding of the immigrant experience. For example, Asian American students have consistently been characterized as the "model minority," yet this has been criticized as an oversimplification and a failure to highlight the disparate national and ethnic communities that actually make up the Asian American population (Chang & Kiang, 2000). Chang and Kiang (2000) give examples of diversity amongst Asian American groups citing the poverty rates of recent Southeast Asians as the highest amongst all immigrant groups. Yet when this group is incorporated into an all Asian American unit of analysis, this feature is not fully comprehended. As a result, these communities are, for example, "overlooked in university recruitment initiatives and financial aid programming" (p.142).

In a study by Kao and Tienda (1998), the researchers looked closely at the educational aspirations of different ethnically and racially diverse immigrant youth and their scholastic achievement. They found that, despite high educational aspirations across minority youth groups, some youths underachieved while others succeeded

academically. The authors point out that, in order to understand the differences they found in each group, it was necessary to explore

> individual group experiences of segregation in school, their understanding about higher education opportunities, youths' family background and parental expectations, as well as the historical and political circumstances of each community. (p. 383)

University brochures and mission statements highlight the diversity of student enrollment and the mosaic of faces in university classrooms. The social circumstances and complex community experiences that are the threads of identity for the growing number of immigrant and refugee students and faculty on our campuses, however, are little understood by many educators, administrators, staff, and counselors. Bowser (1995) expands on this idea:

> the presumption on the part of many European American faculty members and students is that faculty and students of color should be part of their social world, since they take for granted that they are the university. But students from other cultural and social class backgrounds come from communities with interests and concerns foreign to European American middle-class faculty and students. These students do not have the same informal and community connection to the academic life of the university, even in large public urban and state universities and colleges. The only place that students from other class and cultural communities can acknowledge their specific interests and concerns is in multicultural student organizations and alternative cultural events, much like foreign students. Ethnic studies is often the only academic unit in which students of color are likely to encounter faculty familiar with their backgrounds. (p. 41)

Rosaldo (1989) discusses and questions what happens when diverse student voices and revised curriculum begin to penetrate Euro-centric modes of education:

> Diversity in classrooms does more than arouse predictable discomfort and resistance. The moment classrooms become diverse change begins. There is no standing still. New students do not laugh at old jokes. Even those teachers who do nothing to revise their yellowed sheets of lecture notes know that their words have taken on new meanings. New pedagogies begin. New pedagogies include new courses and new texts. (p. xiii)

As individual faculty and departments move in new directions to legitimate and incorporate diverse learner perspectives like the refugee and immigrant students we worked with, it is critical that institutional reform processes similarly move in this direction.

Kiang and Wong (1996), in their study on Asian American programs in public higher education, found that there were only 8 Asian American courses offered throughout the entire University of Massachusetts system at the time (cited in Chang & Kiang, 2002). The lack of courses or programs that deal with the immigrant experience is a theme of discontent amongst many immigrant and refugee university students (Lesage, Ferber, Storrs, & Wong, 2003). Kiang (1999) also conducted a study where he asked alumni who had taken an Asian American course whether it had increased their understanding of the immigrant experience. Of those students surveyed, 90% stated that the course had expanded their understanding. Of this same group 86% commented that their awareness of racial stereotypes had been raised, and 70% said that an Asian American course enabled them to make friends with students from different backgrounds.

Kiang's research (1999) also questioned Asian American students about identity awareness. Many interviewees stated that, after taking an Asian American course, identity ranked as high as learning about the immigrant experience and racial stereotyping. Taylor (1992) writes that including the experiences of diverse communities is much more than just developing more inclusive materials for the classroom; it is about recognizing excluded communities in the curriculum and thus affirming student identity. Taylor (1992) states that through the absence of self image,

> students from the excluded group are given, either directly or by omission a demeaning picture of themselves. Moreover dominant groups tend to entrench their hegemony by inculcating an image of inferiority in the subjugated. The struggle for freedom and equality must therefore pass through the revision of these images. (p. 39)

Feagin, Vera, and Imani (1996) discuss recognition as one of the key concepts at the heart of U.S. racial relations. Feagin and his colleagues demonstrate that students in their study had an inherent desire and need to be recognized and acknowledged for who they are and what their communities represent. These researchers point out that invisibility or not being recognized by peers, educators, and administrators at the university is a major issue of concern with diverse students on campuses today.

Milem (2003) and Hurtado's (2002) research explicitly documents the benefits to both mainstream and ethnically and racially diverse students when universities advocate for the visibility and recognition of students' realities. This implies including coursework from multiple perspectives, hiring diverse administrative staff and faculty that reflect student backgrounds, and developing a variety of programs and offices that support diverse student needs. Still, the courses and programs that recognize the diversity of students and, in particular, the experiences of recently arrived refugee and immigrant students are often isolated and even ghettoized in small centers lacking broader departmental support and recognition from mainstream disciples (Contreras, 1998). Faculty teaching these courses, advising students, and supporting student associations are often confronted by work overload, difficulties in their tenure process, compromising university politics, and even marginalization within the academic community (Cheng & Christensen, 2000).

Rosaldo's (1989) instead calls for alternative spaces, centers, and programs to be viewed by the whole institution as "safe houses" where diverse groups can develop a sense of identity and scholarship:

> Why then do institutions need safe houses? Safe houses can foster self-esteem and promote a sense of belonging in an alien institution. Such factors have proven critical in the retention of students and should not be minimized. Safe houses can be places where diverse groups-under the banners of ethnic studies, feminist studies, gay and lesbian studies-talk together and become articulate about their intellectual projects. When they enter mainstream seminars such students speak with clarity and force about their distinctive projects, concern and perspectives. (p. 5)

Centers and programs that focus on immigrant and refugee issues are slowly beginning to be embraced by the academic community not only as "safe houses" but also as "innovative houses," where faculty and students are recognized and acknowledged for their cutting edge, high quality, and culturally relevant teaching and research that benefits the whole university. Giroux (1997) notes that university educators should move in these new directions, stating that to be considered,

> public intellectuals, university educators need to make cultural difference a defining principle of knowledge production, development and research. In an age of shifting demographics, large-scale immigration and multiracial communities, university teachers must make a firm commitment to cultural difference as central to the relationship between schooling and citizenship. Doing so means dismantling and deconstructing the legacy of nativism and racial chauvinism that has informed the rhetoric of school reform. (p. 267)

For institutions like the university charged with educating its students to become full participating and producing members of society, they must begin to take into account not only the social and economic situation of immigrants and refugees but also their migration experiences and circumstances (James, 2002). Researchers like James (2002) recognize the positive impact of universities that "contextualize and theorize

their relationship with neighboring communities" (p. 4). For many communities, particularly in urban settings, these neighbors are foreign-born people of color. Such a shift calls for moving closer to the principles of community-based education that views education as beginning "with people and their immediate reality, because it recognizes people as creators of their history, not as objects of others reality" (introduction, Harvard Educational Review, Vol. 60, No. 1, p, x).

University of Massachusetts Amherst's Response to Diverse Student Communities

The University of Massachusetts Amherst was founded in 1867 as a land-grant agricultural college dedicated to the study of modern farming, science, technical courses, and liberal arts. The university's mission maintains that the institution exists "to provide an affordable education of high quality and conduct programs of research and public service that advance our knowledge and improve the lives of the people of the Commonwealth (UMass Provost's Office Mission statement, 2004) Today the University of Massachusetts Amherst is the flagship research campus of the state's five-campus university system with an approximate enrollment of nearly 24,000 students (University of Massachusetts Amherst, http://www.umass.edu)

In a study by the Kellogg Commission on the Future of the State and Land Grant Universities (2000), land-grant universities like the University of Massachusetts continue to be challenged to provide educational opportunities that are genuinely equal "because they provide access to success without regard to race, ethnicity, age, occupation, or economic background" and do not offer "learning environments that meet the civic ends of public higher education by preparing students to lead and participate in

a democratic society" (executive summary, p. 3). In addition, the study calls on land-grant universities to begin to make "conscious efforts to bring the resources and expertise at our institutions to bear on community, state, national, and international problems in a coherent way" (executive summary, Kellogg Foundation).

The Office of Institutional Research at UMass shows that for the past decade over 80%-90% of the university student population has consistently been White Non-Hispanic with 10-20% students of color. Yet between 1990-2000, the total ALANA (African American, Latino, Asian and Native American) student population at the university doubled (Office of Institutional Research, University of Massachusetts, 2003) [2]. In 2000 students of color represented 17 percent of the overall university population. Exact numbers for foreign-born students were not available within these university data sets (www.umass.edu/oapa/reports/diverse_democracy)

Nevertheless, according to the National Center on Education Statistics' (NCES) 2004 report titled Condition of Education, the foreign-born undergraduate students in postsecondary institutions generally reflects the overall national foreign-born population. This report states that five percent of the total national undergraduate population was comprised of foreign-born permanent residents and two percent of foreign students with a visa. An additional four percent of undergraduates were foreign-born U.S. citizens. A majority of foreign-born undergraduates came to the United States more than 10 years ago (six percent of the total postsecondary undergraduate population). Among students who reported the country from which they emigrated, Asia

[2] ALANA student statistics include resident alien and immigrant status students. Of the 17% ALANA student population at UMass in 2000 a breakdown of native-born and foreign-born student population was not included. Students are not required to self-report race, ethnicity or immigration status. Foreign-born university students who enter the United States as refugees or immigrants may either be naturalized citizens, permanent residents or residing under refugee immigration status.

was the most frequently cited country of origin by both undergraduate and graduate/first-professional foreign-born students.

Over the past three decades, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has witnessed a marked increase in its foreign-born population (today 12% of the state's total population is foreign-born according to 2000 state Census data). In Western Massachusetts, the cities of Amherst, Holyoke and Springfield have become major resettlement sites of Southeast Asian and former Soviet Union refugees and Latino immigrants (Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants, 2003). In 1999–2000, 11 percent of all national undergraduate students and 17 percent of graduate/first-professional students were foreign-born (National Center on Education Statistics, 2004).

A recent report by Grieco (2003) of the Migration Policy Institute confirms that foreign-born residents account for 11 percent of the total population in the United States, the highest percentage recorded since the 1930 census. Foreign-born undergraduates in 1999–2000 were also more likely than the average undergraduate to be "nontraditional students." A "nontraditional" student is defined as a student with any of the following characteristics: has delayed enrollment, attends part time, works full time while enrolled, is considered financially independent for purposes of determining financial aid, has dependents other than a spouse, is a single parent, or does not have a high school diploma (National Center on Education Statistics, Condition of Education, 2004).

Understanding the rapid and substantial growth in the size of the foreign-born population is crucial for both policymakers and researchers especially given its implications on areas such as education, health care, welfare, and the economy. As a result of these demographic shifts, the University of Massachusetts, like many major

U.S. schools, has been the site of campus re-structuring, re-accommodation, and struggle as students and faculty of color forge forward in making demands for institutional inclusion and change.

This was evident during the March 3, 1997, takeover of the university's Goodell administrative building by members of a variety student government association, the student government senate, and ALANA organization. The reasons sited for the takeover included students' lack of satisfaction with the administration's fulfillment of previous requests and demands for greater recruitment of students of color, increases in the availability of financial aid, increases in faculty of color in tenure track positions, and the presence of Latino American, Native American, Asian American, and Irish Studies departments (Wolf, 1997). The protestors' list of demands dated back to a similar protest in 1992 following the acquittal of four police officers accused of brutally beating the Black motorist Rodney King. Students of color throughout the Pioneer Valley led a series of protests on their respective campuses demanding ethnic studies departments, better cultural housing, and improvements in minority representation in each school's staff, faculty, and student body.

University of Massachusetts campus debates, tensions, and struggles were all part of the CIRCLE project's educational environment at the time of this study (1996-1998). Many of the students in this study were immersed in the political and social realities of a changing campus. The changes and demands that began to unfold came under scrutiny by both new and old constituents. The perspectives and positions held by these groups were often in direct opposition to one another, reflecting many of the same tensions described in this chapter's section on the university as a segregated system.

Although new doors and opportunities for diverse students were opening, old ideas, systems and academic elites clashed with the changes asked for.

A variety of survey studies and committees were conducted and set up to address ALANA student, including refugee and immigrant student, concerns. For example in 1995, the then Chancellor, David Scott, requested the formation of a new Counsel on Community, Diversity and Social Justice. In the fall of 1996 the Counsel was charged with developing an Action Plan to address community, diversity, and social justice dimensions of the campus. In 1998 the Counsel's committee produced a report stressing that diversity, and social justice could no longer be understood as marginal aspects of community life but rather as integral to a proper understanding of the university's mission. The report proposed that these concerns become a central part of planning and budgeting for every department and unit of the campus. The Counsel also provided mini-grants to projects focused on social justice of which "Here I am Now!" was a recipient.

Other efforts began to analyze and question the concerns of diverse student realities on campus including how to retain ALANA students through graduation. A variety of SARIS (Student Affairs Research, Information and Systems) reports looked at ALANA student involvement in campus organizations and what students found lacking in their academic and social lives on campus. The results of a 1997 SARIS report stated that under two-fifths of ALANA students were affiliated with a registered student organization, only one-third with a campus Cultural Center, and less than 5% with either a student group association or a fraternity or sorority. Students reported leaving the Amherst area on weekends and wanting more academic support along with social

activities like movies, speakers, and lecturer-lead activities According to this 1997 SARIS survey, the ALANA first year students who left the university after attending did so for three major reasons. The majority of these 187 students said they either left for financial, academic or home/family issues.

Zuniga (2001), a faculty member in the School of Education and Amherst site coordinator for the national project, Preparing College Students for a Diverse Democracy, presented the results of their research that focused on understanding how students develop cognitive, social, and democratic skills and predispositions through campus programs and initiatives and informal interactions with diverse peers. Through a longitudinal survey the team found that students come to UMass Amherst with,

> varying degrees of experience with racial and ethnic diversity. In general, white students have had less exposure to other racial/ethnic groups than ALANA and multi-racial/ethnic students have. Attitudes towards university practices also vary. White students are much less likely to believe that a diverse student body is important and that universities should aggressively recruit students of color. While these differences are striking, there are also important similarities. Most students rate their ability to work cooperatively with diverse people and their tolerance for others with different beliefs fairly highly. There is also substantial agreement that discrimination is still a major problem in the U.S. and that universities have a responsibility to help students learn to live in a multicultural society. Our entering student population illustrates a core social dilemma. As a group, students believe they are tolerant and open to working with students from other racial/ethnic groups. However, their actual experience with diversity and their beliefs about actions the University should take to promote diversity differ substantially across racial/ethnic groups. (report summary, Preparing College Students for a Diverse Democracy, 2000, p. 1)

While surveys and research have been one way to gain information about ALANA student experiences, UMass has also engaged in program restructuring and development efforts. In the 1997 Chancellors' Strategic Action document there was a call for more concentrated efforts to promote community service-learning and develop

on-campus and off-campus outreach to create diverse learning opportunities. This strategic action document stated that

> the curriculum should include community service learning. Such expanded approaches within curricula will serve to make an education at the modern Land Grant-Research University distinctive. By linking learning and discovery to outreach, we accelerate the creation of a better and wiser world. (Strategic Action, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 1997-2001, p. 20).

Although community service-learning programs had existed under the co-directorship of two University of Massachusetts Amherst faculty since 1993, this was the beginning of linking CSL to the overall university strategic plan. In 2000, various university committees grappled with an effective framework for university outreach, what outreach meant to the university and its partners, and how it should be carried out and accomplished. The formal definition of outreach that has been approved by the University is:

> Outreach is teaching, research, and service that engage the University with external constituencies. Outreach activities generate knowledge, share resources, and apply the expertise of the University of Massachusetts in ways that advance both the public good and University and unit missions. (http://www.umass.edu/outreach/index.html)

According to a 2000 strategic plan document entitled, Community Service Learning at The University Of Massachusetts Amherst, Developing Citizen Scholars: A Land Grant Ideal For the 21st Century, the service-learning program at the University of Massachusetts aims to:

- Develop social consciousness, foster civic responsibility and a better understanding of democracy, and develop and nurture the future community leaders of the Commonwealth and the nation;

- Meet community needs and appropriately connect the University to its communities within the context of the University's overall outreach efforts;
- Enrich and enhance classroom-based courses and programs through the process of reflective practice and community-based learning

The Office of Community Service-learning has a newly appointed director and offers many opportunities for students to link their academic learning to community experiences. Since 1999, the UMass Alliance for Community Transformation has been successfully coordinating a grassroots community development undergraduate program with a service-learning component. This program is coordinated and run by core groups of students with the support of faculty in the anthropology department and spans over various semesters.

In addition to the Office of Community Service-learning, ethnic studies, women studies, and other diverse student support programs have expanded and developed their mission for service to diverse communities. In 2000 the Asian and Asia-American Studies program was institutionalized. The university is also home to the Center for Latin American, Caribbean, and Latino Studies; an Afro-American Studies Department; Center for LGBT issues; a Social Justice Education Program; and a Center for International Education. Other university departments and centers focus on diversity, diverse community issues, and ethnic relations. Furthermore, the university has supported different programs that provide diverse students with academic and community support such as the Bilingual Collegiate Program, United Asian Learning

Resource Center, Every Women's Center, Stonewall Center, and the Center for Collegiate Education for Black and Other Minority Students, to name just a few.

Despite the efforts and influence of university students, administrators, and particular faculty to support diversity thorough proactive programming and institutional change, it seems that many of the problems and struggles of diverse students and faculty remain unchanged and in some cases have worsened (Lovely, 2003). Although ethnic studies programs have slowly received support, questions about sustained university financial backing and university-wide recognition and representation of these programs remain points of tension. Projects focused on specific issues, like CIRCLE, have been downsized and ultimately not institutionalized as university programs once their own funding runs out.

Over the past years a lack of funding combined with overall state budget cuts have affected various programs that support minority students on campus like the United Asian Learning Resource Center, the Bilingual Collegiate Program, and the Center for Collegiate Education for Black and Other Minority Students (MacClarence, 2001). Many of the programs that have existed for years still find themselves being questioned as to why they exist and what their contributions to university life are. In a recent op-ed piece for the Boston Globe (2004), Ann Ferguson, the then director the U Mass Women's Studies Program, directed her comments to right-wing attacks on the Vision 2000 university-wide initiative that reviews women's and gender issues at the university and the Women's Studies Program itself.

In an article in the Daily Collegian, the region's largest collegiate daily, MacClarence (2001) states that, despite some of the gains made in student of color

recruitment, "a slowing economy, welfare reform and anti-affirmative action policies have sharply curbed enrollment and retention of certain minority groups" (p. 1). The 1999 decision of the Chancellor to redefine and ultimately end affirmative action policies has resulted in a drop in the number of ALANA students attending U Mass. According to a University of Massachusetts Office of Informational Research fact sheet, from fall 1997 to fall 2000, 56 percent fewer Black high school students came to Amherst as first year students (www.umass.edu/oapa/publications/factsheets/race-ethnicity). This same trend was reflected in other first year minority students. From the fall of 1996 to the fall of 2000, the rate of entering Latino freshmen had dropped 60 percent and the number of Cape Verdean students entering the university had decreased from 31 to 12 (same source as above). According to the Corporate Free Press these changes have not only affected the racial and ethnic make-up of the university but also the diversity of area households that make less than $60,000 per year (Lovely, 2003). This can be viewed as a reflection of the significant links between race, ethnicity, and class of university populations and its surrounding community demographics.

According to Gargano (2003), the Vice Chancellor for Student Affairs, however, "after the Supreme Court ruling, the University was required to review its admissions criteria. The Supreme Court states that one admission criteria can't have more weight than another. Admissions need to become more comprehensive - a holistic approach" (cited in Lovely, 2003, p. 1). In the same article, Gargano stated that,

> UMass admissions policy is a work in progress. Although the revised admissions policy won't be fully revamped for a few more semesters, the saga unfolding at UMass reflects developments taking place on campuses across the country. It will all be a process of experimentation. (Lovely, 2003, p. 1)

In spite of the changing admissions policy trends and state funding cut backs at public learning institutions, overall diverse student numbers continue to increase even if these numbers are not proportionate in all cases with national population trends. The National Center for Education Statistics (2004) concluded that two notable differences exist in the distribution of diverse students at the undergraduate university level nationally. First, the proportion of White students has decreased somewhat (from 75% to 68%), while the proportion of students in each other racial/ethnic group has increased (combined 25%-32%). Combined, minority students represented nearly a third of all undergraduates in 1999–2000, up from about a quarter in 1989–1990.

Challenges at multicultural, public universities like U Mass will continue. The presence of a diverse staff, student body, curriculum, and program spectrum not only add to the complex and at times confrontational dimensions of the institution but they are ultimately necessary for democratic processes at the university to exist. A 2003 report presented by an Academic Affairs team, Community, Diversity, and Social Justice affirmed this idea finding that respondents indicated

> strong support for goals of Community, Diversity, and Social Justice as central to the mission of U Mass. This affirmation of CDSJ as central to the mission of the University is a key finding and a foundation upon which to build. Reports on day-to-day experiences, however, indicate that Blacks, Latinos, and Native Americans are less likely than Whites to believe that there is respect for cultural diversity on campus. Another important theme arises around social-class differences, indicating that there is a lack of respect felt across job classifications, especially among classified staff. (p. 1)

The project highlighted in this study was a part of the social landscape I have just described. The period that I look at (1996-1998) preceded the establishment of UMass's Office for Community Service-learning in 2000. Prior to this office, two senior faculty

members coordinated and administered community service-learning courses, curriculum development grants and a citizen scholars programs for many years on campus. The majority of these courses supported CSL in the context of a one-semester course. In this sense, CIRCLE has been a forerunner in establishing on-going relationships with diverse undergraduate student populations and refugee communities in a CSL context over various semesters. In the following section I provide a brief overview of the CIRCLE project.

A Description of the CIRCLE Project as Case Study

CIRCLE (Center for Immigrant and Refugee Leadership and Empowerment) was a six-year statewide collaboration (1994-2000) amongst immigrant and refugee communities, three University of Massachusetts campuses (Boston, Lowell and Amherst), and the Massachusetts Office of Refugees and Immigrants. The central mission of CIRCLE was to generate dialogue and new learning opportunities across refugee and immigrant groups and educational institutions through community education and immigrant and refugee leadership (Arches, Darlington-Hope, Gerson, Gibson, Habana-Hafner & Kiang, 1997). A unique component of CIRCLE at the University of Massachusetts Amherst site was developing peer mentor relationships between immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and refugee community youth through service-learning initiatives. A team of graduate students and faculty coordinated and facilitated the education and research agendas of the Amherst site project. After many community assessments, training sessions, and outreach initiatives with the Vietnamese, Cambodian, and Russian-speaking communities in western

Massachusetts, the team developed a series of undergraduate courses focused on community development education and leadership with refugee and immigrant communities.

The purpose of these courses was to engage primarily refugee and immigrant undergraduate students and communities in a series of community development courses integrating experiential and popular education and the immigrant/refugee experiences as central themes. Through classroom discussions, reading materials, case studies, and group activities, students learned about applying popular and critical education theory including key principles of Freire and other scholars in the field. Students also learned specific skills and techniques that foster empowering educational practices in the classroom and community work. The refugee and immigrant experience was the context for our exploration and practice. The major assignment in the course was to develop a community project with refugee youth applying classroom content and student experiences. As a way to reflect upon their classroom and community experiences, students were asked to keep a learning journal that would be read and commented on by course facilitators. In the classroom, the CIRCLE team was mindful of modeling a practice that would "give students the experience of what we were proposing to do with others" (Fox, 1994, p. 54) in the service-learning part of the course.

The sponsoring faculty and CIRCLE director had long established relationships with local immigrant and refugee communities and their ethnic organizations. The director, an immigrant and women of color, also had years of experience working within the university system and had developed critical relationships with ethnic community organizations and centers and faculty of color on campus. This was essential for the

project's success as it was a key way to contact and connect with refugee youth in Springfield (Vietnamese) and Amherst (Cambodian) and with refugee and immigrant undergraduates at the university. The classes we offered were listed as general education courses in the fall and spring semester undergraduate course listings. Since the CIRCLE team wanted to make sure that immigrant and refugee undergraduate students heard about the class, we actively promoted the course through different ethnic student associations, ethnic studies programs, and international student support and tutoring centers.

The faculty director had many connections to on-campus ethnic organizations and individual faculty. She along with graduate student staff personally promoted the course in classes and center orientations. This intense outreach resulted in the majority of our students being refugee and immigrant students (with a majority of foreign-born/first-generation students) coming from a variety of cultures and across many disciplines and majors. Although new to most students, the idea of working directly with local refugee communities appealed to many of these immigrant and refugee undergraduate students. Students were encouraged to participate for at least two semesters through general education credits and independent study.

At the time I conducted my research (1996-1998), service-learning pedagogy was beginning to become a more common practice at the university. However, the CSL office that now exists on campus had not yet been established. Most of the refugee and immigrant students we worked with did not know what service-learning was. Many thought it was individual volunteer work or an internship with a contracted community agency. Some of the participants had previously engaged in volunteer work through the

university. Others pointed out that they were told "doing service" looked good on your resume and could help you get into graduate school. Many of the CIRCLE students concurred that service opportunities on campus generally mirrored white middle-class experiences, not their own community experience. As a result most of the students had preferred to volunteer in their home communities during break or outside of school time (see Coles, 1999, for similar observations). The vast majority of the students had never taken a service-learning course or a course that focused on community development issues in immigrant and refugee communities.

In this dissertation I look at the experiences of 10 undergraduate students that worked together for over this two-year period (1996-1998). All of the participants were foreign-born, refugee and immigrant students. Six students were Southeast Asian refugees and immigrants (Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, and Laos), one student emigrated from Latin America (of Korean descent), one student was an African immigrant, and two students were immigrants from China and Taiwan. These students were involved in the CIRCLE project for more than four semesters. In fact some students became facilitators in the undergraduate course or in weekend training sessions. Others took independent study credits or used their summer break to continue to develop their projects with youth groups in Springfield and Amherst. Other students purposefully connected their work-study funding to collaborate with CIRCLE as administrative or project assistants.

As a researcher, learner, and facilitator working with CIRCLE, I decided to conduct my doctoral research focused on the community service-learning aspect of the CIRCLE project. As a white European American female who grew-up in a German

bilingual household, I had much to learn from the project director, my fellow graduate student facilitators, the undergraduate students, and refugee community youth (the faculty director, the majority of graduate facilitators, and the students were all people of color). I saw myself primarily as a learner in this endeavor and as an interpreter of an educational experience we shared. Prior to engaging in doctoral work at the University of Massachusetts, I was an educational coordinator for a refugee resettlement program in New York where I spent most of my time working with many of the same ethnic communities represented in the CIRCLE project. At the time of this research, I had recently returned from a one-year fellowship in Vietnam so I was familiar with the language and place of origin of many of the refugee and immigrant students and youth in this study.

Freire's vision of communities having the power and capacity to change institutions and ultimately change society through their action and reflection (praxis) and dialogue informs my commitment to write a dissertation about this educational experience. I hope that sharing how a cohort of refugee and immigrant undergraduate students made meaning of their experiences in a service-learning course that placed their knowledge and action at the center of the curriculum will add to this field of literature and accompany the voices that challenge Euro-centric models of education.

Below I briefly outline the primary activities in our course and community work.

Undergraduate Course Work:

The CIRCLE Amherst site was housed in the Center for International Education within the School of Education. In the undergraduate courses, Community Education

and Leadership Development I and II, students focused on a variety of topics and activities including: (see appendix for a copy of the syllabus)

- Engaged in trust building exercises and dialogue about who we are, where we are from, what we like to do in and outside of the university etc.
- Read articles and book chapters about the immigrant experience and written by scholars of color in many cases
- Discussed what community development means
- Discussed and role-played the notion of power (social, community, class, race etc.)
- Developed a common understanding of culture and read articles about the topic
- Learned about community mapping as a tool and strategy in community development
- Participated in weekend training sessions such as; how to facilitate community meetings, how to develop a proposal, how to develop a training curriculum, how to work with youth in the community
- Viewed films and photography related to the refugee and immigrant experience
- Engaged in role plays and theater simulating the refugee and immigrant experience in different contexts (language issues, cultural issues, diaspora, intergenerational issues, social-political topics, economic differences etc.)
- Wrote journals
- Wrote poetry
- Sang songs
- Spent hours and hours with the refugee youth in Springfield and Amherst

- Brought refugee youth to participate in events on campus
- Hung out with the youth at their homes or in their communities
- Cooked and ate lots of good food
- Wrote proposals to fund our projects
- Learned about photography and visual images
- Shot short video films
- Played cultural games
- Danced at each others houses or went to dance parties on campus

These are just some of the many activities and projects that the students and youth engaged in. Each semester we offer an undergraduate education course along with other opportunities for independent study or facilitation-work study experience. This way we were able to offer students the possibility of continuing with CIRCLE for various semesters. Classes were usually held once a week for three hours.

Community Service-learning Component

A required community service component was a central part of the courses. Undergraduate students were expected to spend at least 4-6 hours a week in the field. Students were introduced and presented to Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee youth (ages 7-15). These youth were in different ways affiliated to community organizations and/or specific community leaders (faith-based, health, civic) in the Springfield and Amherst areas that the project director had many years of experience working with. Springfield and Amherst have been the largest resettlement sites of Southeast Asian refugees in Western Massachusetts. The way our outreach project was designed is quite

different from typical service-learning projects. The purpose of the service-learning project was to bring 5-10 youth together with undergraduate students facilitators/ organizers and have them collectively develop a project they all wanted to work on over the course of 2-3 semesters. Therefore sufficient time needed to be built into the process for students and youth to get to know one another, find out what issues youth were interested and what were some pressing concerns in their community and then work on developing a project.

The majority of the refugee families in Springfield and Amherst were resettled in the area throughout the 1980s into the early 1990s as a result of an increase in government refugee resettlement quotas during that time. The majority of the youth and their families we worked with lived in urban apartments or public housing and were employed by local factories or shops and received public assistance. The youth engaged in the community service-learning project were elementary and middle school students attending public schools in Springfield or Amherst. In general the Vietnamese and Cambodian refugee communities that the undergraduates worked with were living at or below the poverty line.

Initially undergraduate students were accompanied to their community sites by graduate students and faculty as a way to make the students feel comfortable and to legitimize the project in the eyes of community members. Students were connected to a community organization, school or community project and charged with the task of developing a project or organizing experience with the refugee youth. During many of the exploration activity sessions with youth, students videotaped or tape-recorded themselves so that they could reflect on their facilitation skills and remember in detail

what transpired during the youth meeting. The youth meetings were always varied. Sometimes undergraduate students were able to meet in a youth's home, other times a community organization provided space, on occasion the students and youth met in a park or a mall, or the undergraduate students invited the youth to come to their campus for a variety of workshops and events. Undergraduate students prepared each youth session in advance and consulted with graduate students about their weekly meeting before going into the field. Field experiences were discussed during class time either as a whole class or in small groups. Undergraduate students kept learning journals and wrote a series of reflection papers about their experiences as well.

The Collective Visual Portrayal project in an example of various semesters of work with the 10 CIRCLE undergraduate students and refugee community youth I mentioned above. This project evolved out of one of the course's weekend workshops focused on small grant writing. Students were asked to develop a proposal idea that could lead to a community project with the youth they were beginning to get to know through the service-learning component. Here this group of students conceived the idea of using photography with refugee youth. Shortly after developing a draft proposal about their idea, the Chancellor's Counsel on Community, Diversity and Social Justice at U Mass put out a request for innovative student projects. CIRCLE students proposed a series of workshops that would train refugee youth to use photography as a way to discuss and document their community. Workshop sessions were designed using popular education techniques and training methods students had explored in their community development education class. Finally the workshops with refugee youth would culminate in a number of university and community photography exhibits.

CIRCLE students won the Chancellor's office grant and went on to develop, administer, coordinate, and struggle with this project over a two-semester period. Part of the excitement and struggle was organizing the youth groups. Once groups were organized, undergraduate students trained the youth in photography (with the help from students who were visual arts majors), worked with the youth to think about their community through visual narrative, challenged them to express themselves through photography, encouraged youth to develop particular photographs and finally write a story or poem about each photography. Students and youth publicly presented their work at the opening exhibit. The exhibit was titled "Here I am Now! ". The visual installation was presented at various Five-college campus venues, in the youth communities and at an ethnography conference the following year.

This student-initiated photography project is an example of learner knowledge and expertise being fully integrated into a reciprocal university and community service-learning experience. Undergraduate students were encouraged to apply their knowledge about the immigrant and refugee experience to their academic and community work. Students, in turn, applied classroom knowledge such as proposal writing for community initiatives, facilitation and mentoring skills with youth, community outreach techniques, and critical reflection through writing (journal writing and reflection papers) to their specific community youth activities. Youth were introduced to photography, university student peers and to various college campuses. The refugee youth taught those of us on the university side a great deal about what is like to be a refugee youth in the U.S. today. Moreover, undergraduates and youth shared common experiences of living in households and communities that are inter-generational, multi-lingual, multi-class,

religiously and politically diverse, of diverse immigration status, and sharing worldviews that are very different from white middle class America.

In addition to the use of visual narratives, undergraduate students used various written medium (poetry, stories, essays, journal entries, and peer interviews) to compliment the exhibit and reflect on their experiences in the project. Some student narratives were about the refugee and immigrant experience in the U.S. Other students reflected on their experience working with their peers in a university and community project, some students and youth talked about their families, a few wrote poems that described their community and others shared how it felt to have their identities and voices recognized by the Chancellor's office through the Visual Portrayal project. The narratives were as diverse as the photographs each student took. In class we read about the immigrant and refugee experience, we saw films, and we learned about popular education, experiential learning and community organizing and development.

As a note, our decision to work with refugee youth groups evolved as a response to a request from the larger refugee community during our initial community assessments over the first two years of the CIRCLE project (1994-1995). It is a challenge to be brief when describing a multi-dimensional project like CIRCLE. To be sure, CIRCLE courses and projects were much more nuanced and complex than I am fully able to describe here. This is just a thumbnail description some of the important elements I believe arose from the educational experience. I continue to reflect on the Visual Portrayal and "Here I am Now!" projects as I develop an educational learning theory framework in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL PEDAGOGY, SITUATED LEARNING AND FUNDS OF KNOWLEDGE: A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Introduction

In this chapter I develop a framework of educational theories focused on teaching practices, curriculum, and worldviews that promote enhancing the academic climate and experiences of immigrant and refugee students in higher education. This section is guided by a desire to synthesize the theoretical and pedagogical responses, critiques, and forms of resistance that challenge Euro-centric dynamics within the university today. Accompanying the increase in student and faculty diversity on college campuses, a profusion of theoretical perspectives and critiques about educational policy, practice, curriculum, pedagogy, social mobility, and stratification has provided important frames to view present-day university, community, and student relations. Here I concentrate on educational theories that have informed the way I view higher education and the impact these perspectives have had on my teaching and research in community service-learning contexts.

I believe it is important to develop one's positions as an integral part of any research exercise. I firmly agree with Freire (1970) that through the reflection of language and action, we can transform habitual thought into critical consciousness. Freire affirms that critical consciousness is characterized by the recognition that cultural institutions like the university are created and sustained by human purpose and action. Language in turn both shapes and reflects people's perceptions of cultural institutions. As students, teachers, and community members, we have the ability to collectively

analyze, understand and in principle modify, and transform the social institutions we are a part of. By recognizing that people conceive and build social institutions, we also understand that people are capable of transforming institutions. According to Freire (1970), this can only be achieved through "praxis: the action and reflection of men [and women] in the world in order to transform it" (p. 66).

A reflection of the "literature" that analyzes how educational practice, theory and institutions can play a critical role in shifting dominant structures is just one aspect in a journey of becoming a critical researcher. Indeed it is my intention that the language of the students and the community participants I worked with in CIRCLE will provide the main voices of critical thought throughout this dissertation. Nevertheless, for the purpose of this study and as a way to position myself within the context of the research, it is important that I develop a theoretical framework that explains the educational choices and directions I took as part of a multicultural team in the CIRCLE project.

When I came to graduate school, I was committed to continuing my work with refugee and immigrant groups with a hope of promoting collective change and transformation (though I may not have named them as such then). CIRCLE became that space and later the site of this research exercise. Crucial educational processes such as investigation, thematization and problematization (Freire, 1970) have become basic principles in guiding my teaching and research. The work of other educators, scholars, and activists has also influenced my thinking and this is my opportunity to reflect on their language and how their contributions have shifted my habitual thinking into something more critical.

Key to the theoretical framework of my study are three education theories: the critical and experimental learning theory, the situated learning theory and the funds of knowledge theory. I have developed this framework to facilitate an understanding of students' experiences in CIRCLE, an alternative model of service-learning pedagogy full of complex and multi-layered education processes. Through the prisms of this theoretical framework, I better explain and interpret the students' writing, interviews, photography and my own observations. At the same time writing through a developed theoretical lens provides the reader(s) with an organized frame that helps explain how the researcher understands her research project and the findings that emerged.

The first area reviews experiential and critical learning theory. Dewey (1916), Freire (1970), Horton (1990) and Kolb (1984) and more recently critical educators like Giroux (1997), Sleeter (1996) and McLaren (1989; 1995) advocate the value in students' learning, acting and reflecting on culturally, historically, socially and politically relevant and meaningful experiences. This body of literature critiques institutions that sustain elitist knowledge regimes and discredit student and community knowledge and expertise. Critical and experiential learning theory claims that learners who are encouraged to analyze and question local problems and bring critical analysis to bear will generate knowledge and answer real questions. Educational models that promote experience, action, and subsequent reflection offer students and community members the possibility of becoming learners and teachers of their world (Freire, 1970) through an understanding of issues in situational contexts (Giles & Eyler, 1994). Promoting a shift in the hierarchy of knowledge construction is at the core of experiential and critical learning theory.

Following this section I include an overview of the main critiques of critical and experiential pedagogy and theory. I have included this section because I believe the critiques of this particular learning theory provide educators and researchers with additional vantage points from which to view the theory.

The next section reviews situated learning theory. This theory views learning through activity in the company of others as a way for peers to become "productive members in a community of practice" (Bacon, 2002, p. 43). Furthermore, situated learning theory supports educational approaches where learning takes place through proximity and social interactions. Lave and Wenge (1991) emphasize learning as a social experience. These scholars believe that significant learning takes place when it is situated in interactions among peers and rooted in communities. This school of thought argues that in recognizing the potential of our students and communities in reciprocal, guided relationships and as collective learning communities working together in a particular context, we embrace a model of knowledge development that moves away from traditional banking forms of education.

Next I explore the anthropological concept, funds of knowledge (Olmedo, 1997; Velez Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). This concept recognizes, respects and includes the multiple resources that racially and ethnically diverse students and communities possess. An important assumption underlying the funds of knowledge concept is that "communities know many things and have many skills; yet this wisdom is generally not recognized as relevant to the educational process in schools" (Olmedo, 1997, p. 550). This concept posits that funds of knowledge not only provide the basis for understanding the cultural systems of diverse students but are

also important and useful assets in every classroom. I will discuss students' written and visual narratives as a pedagogical vehicle and example that educators might use to tap into the funds of knowledge of a diverse community of learners. The final section will conclude this chapter and present a matrix for utilizing these three theories as a theoretical frame for the purpose of this study.

Foundations of Critical and Experiential Learning Pedagogy

> In CIRCLE we are encouraged to constantly reflect and evaluate ourselves, the communities we come from and work with and together with our own experiences and the work we have yet to do, we create our voice. (undergraduate student journal entry)

Introduction

Over the past three decades critical pedagogy has developed as a loud response to the deterministic positions proposed earlier by reproduction educators. Of the works I have reviewed, there is convergence on a variety of points. In general scholars in this field are highly skeptical of a society that can,

> allow savage inequalities to exist, they are equally charged against sexual, race, gender and class-based aberrations and finally they are passionate about placing teachers, students and administrators in places where they can be the creators of their own meaning-making-systems to undercut experiences of oppression, alienation and subordination and transform these experiences into expressions of fair and just social relations. (Kanpol, 1997, p. 5)

Critical and experiential pedagogy theorists, like Aronowitz (2001), Giroux (1997), Macedo (1994), Apple (1990), and Freire (1970), believe schools and universities are institutions where critical thinking and radical ideas emerge and develop. This thinking, in turn, has the potential to challenge, transform, and change the status

quo. These theorists also believe that culture is produced by all the actors in an institution versus being a reproduction of a dominant culture. In general they agree that the struggles of oppressed and marginalized people in social institutions open projects of possibility that can lead to positive repercussions on societal change. Kanpol (1997) and others believe that critical pedagogy is more like a "movement to subvert and change areas of the school life that are alienating and oppressive and remain a democratic criterion and a moral and ethical imperative" (p. 12).

According to Giroux (1997), critical education operates on two basic assumptions: "a need for a language of critique and questioning i.e.: rejecting the notion that public education is economic efficiency and to develop a language that goes beyond critique and to elaborate the possibility of the human potential" (p. 11). Giroux (1997), along with other critical pedagogues, contests educators who are unable "to develop a theory of schooling that offers the possibility of counter-hegemonic struggle and ideological battle" by holding on to a view of "schools as sites of contestation and conflict or simplified versions of domination [where the] only political alternative to the current role that schools play in the wider society is to abandon them altogether" (p. 120). Giroux (1997) continues this argument saying that,

> power and discourse are now investigated not merely as the single echo of the logic of capital but as a polyphony of voices mediated with different layers of reality shaped through an interaction of dominant and subordinate forms of power. By recognizing and interrogating the different layers of meaning and struggle that make up the terrain of schooling, radical educators can fashion not only a language of critique but also a language of possibility. (p.122)

It is through the use and development of such language that critical pedagogy can critique, transcend and ultimately transform educational institutions. This area of

critical pedagogy has most resonated with my research and practice with refugee and immigrant students in higher education. It is with these ideas and practices that CIRCLE continued to move in directions that were different from the traditional ways community service-learning or community development education had been taught.

Language and Voice

An important part of Freire's political agenda states that oppressed people can "challenge life's circumstances by understanding the structural constraints that originally set them up as unequal members in society" (Kanpol, 1997, p. 13). According to this school of thought it is critical to view "experiences as rooted in a view of language and culture that links dialogue and meaning to a social project emphasizing the political" (Giroux, 1997, p.133). Freire (1970) believes that language, culture and ideas need to be challenged and that language guides our actions, behavior and thoughts (Kanpol, 1997). Freire advocates that change takes place through the process of creating a new or alternative language that describes how social experience is constructed and how we are social actors who move within these structures. Freire and many of his colleagues firmly believe that if oppressed people are able to use language critically then societal change will take place.

A key concept in critical pedagogy, "voice," has been defined as the "personal oppressive experiences combined with the hope to change those experiences through a language based on the multiple events that make up a person's history" (Kanpol, 1997, p. 13). Bakhtin's (1981) work in particular has influenced critical pedagogy's notion of voice. Baktin (1981) views language usage as "an eminently social and political act

linked to the ways individuals define meaning and author their relations to the world through ongoing dialogue with others" (cited in Giroux, 1997, p. 132). In conservative forms of pedagogy, however, "student voice is reduced to the immediacy of its performance, existing as something to be measured, administered, registered, controlled thus its lived quality is dissolved under an ideology of control and management" (Giroux, 1997, p. 124).

Bakhtin (1981) also emphasizes the need to understand the ongoing struggle between various groups over language and meaning. Moreover, Bakhtin's writing expands on the nature of authorship by analyzing how people give value to and work within different modes of discourse. According to Giroux (1997), language is part of the politics of struggle and representation embedded in relations of power that dictate how discourse is defined and negotiated. The driving momentum of voice and of authorship is inseparable from the relations between individuals and groups,

> Language is not a neutral medium that passes freely and easily into the private property of the speaker's intentions; it is populated-overpopulated with the intentions of others. Expropriating it, forcing it to submit to one's own intentions and accents is a difficult and complicated process. (Giroux, 1997, p. 249)

I am particularly interested in the different aspects of language that shape and define the actors and their experiences within a university setting. Within the university and the classroom students', teachers' and administrators' voices are all part of a concert of struggles and critiques that can challenge and transform the educational and societal structures that limit diverse perceptions of reality. As Giroux writes (1997),

> Schools and universities are one of the primary public spheres where, through the influence of authority, resistance and dialogue, language is able to shape the way various individuals and groups encode and thereby engage the world. In other words, schools are places where language

> projects, imposes, and constructs particular norms and forms of meaning. In this sense, language does more than merely present "information"; in actuality, it is used as a basis both to "instruct" and to produce subjectivities. (p. 121)
>
> If language is inseparable from lived experience and from how people create a distinctive voice, it is also connected to an intense struggle among different groups over what will count as meaningful and whose cultural capital will prevail in legitimizing particular ways of life. Within schools, discourse produces and legitimates configurations of time, space, and narratives, placing particular renderings of ideology, behavior and the representation of everyday life in a privileged perspective. (p. 121)

Sociological research models concur with critical educators and theorists. By developing, in this case, immigrant and cultural identity and voice as an asset, student learning and achievement, classroom experiences, and the university environment at large can be enhanced (Portes & Zhou, 1993; Kao & Tienda, 1996; Rumbaut, 1997).

Experience, Action and Reflection

Deans (1999) describes the threads that bind experiential and critical learning arguments as "the centrality of experience in learning, an articulation of the intimate relationship between action, reflection and learning, an emphasis on dialogue, and a hope for social change through education combined with community action" (p. 26). Scholars like Dewey (1916), Kolb (1994), and Horton and Freire (1990) promote educational processes that tie knowledge to experience. In addition, critical and experiential educators place value on making learners' experiences and history the central components of all educational endeavors. Through facilitated processes of questioning and open-dialogue based on student knowledge, experiential and critical educators believe students are able to unpack and grapple with the social dimensions of an experience as it relates to race, class, gender, culture, sexual orientation, politics and

ideology. Within this educational paradigm, teachers are charged with offering students a variety of tools to challenge and change their surroundings. Among these tools stands the opportunity to test their ideas and information in active social situations (Deans, 1999). Because the classroom in a way is a microcosm of society, it is through action that critical and experiential educators claim teachers can create spaces where students learn to define problems, reflect on situations and struggle with real-life solutions.

The belief that all students can become active, critical, and engaged learners committed to transforming social inequalities and injustices is powerful. With this goal in mind, experiential and critical theory promotes educational approaches that nurture mutual learning outside of the classroom to develop such skills. Through the observation of a problem, conceptualization and definition of the problem, participation and action in an aspect of the problem, and guided critical reflection, scholars affirm that educators can guide students to become agents of change (Cone & Harris, 1996). Critical pedagogy has been deeply concerned with students developing critical capacities to reflect, critique and act to transform the conditions under which they live.

Freire's work directly challenges conventional assumptions about both the purpose and methods of education, claiming that dominant structures are by definition oppressive. Radical still today, Freire (1970) believed that social change can only take place when learning is connected to the experiences of the learners. In addition, curriculum, educational materials, research questions and solutions must spring from the lives of the learners. Exploring students' experiences and realities must be guided by a process of inquiry or problematization leading to reflection and action (praxis) and then to further inquiry.

Critical consciousness, coined by Freire (1970), is learning to perceive social, political and economic contradictions, taking action against them and recreating the oppressive elements of reality. Characterized by recognizing that cultural institutions are created and sustained by humans, the concept of critical consciousness stresses that human action and language both shape and reflect people's perceptions of cultural institutions. Since all elements that make up the human world were given their initial form by people, they are susceptible to reform. Freire states that critical consciousness can lead to an analysis and understanding of social institutions like the university classroom and ultimately to modifications and the redistribution of power to members of the community (Shor, 1987). Although Freire views institutions of higher education in general as reflections of dominant culture and therefore an instrument of oppression, he acknowledges teachers and small spaces within higher education institutions as possible catalysts and places of change (Deans, 1999).

Critical pedagogy advocates that students and educators can collectively explore and contest the notions of power and authority on their campuses. Darder (1991) explains how teacher authority can be used to transform the classroom:

> unlike traditional views on teacher authority, an emancipatory view of authority suggests that although teachers hold knowledge that is considered to render them prepared to enter the classroom, they must come to recognize that knowledge as historical and cultural product is forever in a creative state of partiality. All forms of discourse represent only one small piece of the larger puzzle that constitutes all possible knowledge at any given moment in time. Hence all forms of knowledge must be open for question, examination and critique by and with students in the process of learning. In this way teachers actively use their authority to create the conditions for a critical transformation of consciousness that takes place in the process of the interaction of teacher, students and the knowledge they produce together. (p. 110)

Opening dialogue in the classroom can lead students to become questioners and actors of their education. Darder (1991) again summarizes these ideas:

> Critical educators encourage the free and un-coerced exchange of ideas and experiences. They demonstrate a caring for their students and provide them with emotional support to help them overcome their feelings of inadequacy and guilt, as they become critics of the social world. What dialogue then represents is a human phenomenon in which students, with the guidance of the teacher, move into the discovery of themselves as social agents. It is through their encounter with reality that they are supported and yet challenged to assess their world critically and to unmask the central contradictions of their existence. And in so doing by way of praxis-the authentic union of their action and reflection-they enter into a process of conscientization. (p. 95)

Padilla (1997) writes that teachers and facilitators must enter full heartedly into the process of critical education:

> pedagogical practice of mutual story-sharing, a central ingredient of what Paulo Freire has called a dialogic pedagogy. Sharing a story illustrates the conviction of and responsibility for the practice of classroom testimonials that must always involve both teacher and students. Confessional narratives should not be mistaken as an attempt for establishing my authority and power in the classroom but rather it represents a demonstration to students of this type of teaching and learning through the practice of doing by example, through the act of my work. Liberatory learning is not something which is given deliberately. Instead it is struggled for in an ongoing struggle for claiming emancipatory ideas and practices from educators whose educational perspectives and approaches are the complete opposite. (p. 21)

Applying critical and experiential theory is easier said than done. Most students have been conditioned to think teacher-talk and teacher authority are the norm and therefore the way things in the classroom should be. For most students a good teacher prepares notes and talks from them. When students are introduced to the critical classroom, many feel that the course is fluffy, touchy feely, not serious, that they are being put on the spot, made to talk and share their feelings. Shor (1996) explains how some of his students at first resented his critical approach and the value he placed on

student input. Some of his students initially described fellow students' comments as boring, not worthy, and lacking expertise. In fact one student wrote him a note stating that he thought most of the students' commentaries were stupid and that as a teacher he should not lower his intellectual standards and ability by teaching in such a manner.

Critical pedagogy stresses the importance of relating to students' experiences and taking students' needs and problems as starting points. Using alternative writing and visual media are tools for students to teach fellow classmates and instructors about who they are, what they feel, and what they are passionate about, thus shifting the traditional relationship of anonymous student and omnipotent teacher. Through critical narrative and its comparison to examples of dominant narrative, teachers and students together can reveal the ideology underlying hegemonic curriculum, examine its hierarchically organized bodies of knowledge, and critique the way such curriculum marginalizes or disqualifies the knowledge of the working class, women, or people of color.

Bartolome and Trueba (2000) bring into the discussion the important notion that as teachers working with immigrant students we need to the have a deep awareness of the sociopolitical and economic realties that shape our students lives and the capacity they have to transform:

> while teaching strategies and techniques are important, focusing chiefly on the technical issues often distracts the teacher from the very real ideological and political dimension of teaching immigrant students. Educators of immigrant and U.S. born minority students need to first and foremost, develop both political and ideological clarity in order to become more effective in their instructional efforts. (p. 277)

Kiang (2000) shares with his readers and students his own poetry and that of other poets as a way to convey stories that "make meaningful curricular connections with students' life experience and prior learning" (p.143). He uses poetry as a way to

ignite the "emotional, intellectual, cultural and political [self] in ways that have been completely neglected if not actively extinguished by 'world class' college curriculum" (p. 145). Christensen (1994), in her short article about teaching poetry, writes that "poetry is by turns playful, respectful, angry and political. Because poetry is so closely related to music, it provides students with an easy slide into writing" (p. 184). As educators, we should push our students and ourselves to interact with multiple narrative forms. Student poetry, as example, places the lives and identities of the authors at the center of the curriculum and facilitates the exploration of writing.

In a sense these authors are stating that our duty as educators is to acknowledge and present our political and ideological selves into our work and believe in our students as agents of change. Delpit (1988) adds that the commitment and influence of the political self will have little effect if only applied in the classroom. Rather, Delpit advises that we infuse our political selves throughout the structures of the institution:

> I don't think that I let the onus of change rest entirely with the students. I am also involved in political work both inside and outside of the educational system, and that political work demands that I place myself to influence as many gate keeping points as possible. And it is there that I agitate for change-pushing gatekeepers to open doors to a variety of styles and codes. What I'm saying, however, is that I do not believe that political change toward diversity can be effected form the bottom up, as do some of my colleagues. They seem to believe that if we accept and encourage diversity within classrooms, then diversity with automatically be accepted at gate keeping points. I believe that will never happen. What will happen is that the student who reaches the gate keeping points will understand they have been lied to and will react accordingly. (p. 291)

Various scholars caution the critical teacher, however, to take cultural differences into consideration when developing curriculum as students come from varying educational experiences. Delpit (1988) gives the following example.

> It is important to discuss the teaching styles and cultural differences of authority with progressive white and black teachers. Black families use directives and rarely offer so many opportunities for the young...in school settings it has been shown that options and vague direct/indirect statements confuse students of color. In an attempt to be liberating by offering choices, white teachers may be creating an environment where only white students will understand this kind of question or dialogue and thus create unequal opportunities in the classroom. (p. 290)

Critical pedagogy supports the philosophy that through real-life contexts and experiences learners can become critical of the status quo and its oppressive structures. Trueba and Zou (1994) expand,

> Critical theory and critical pedagogy are intimately related with the central assumptions of cultural theory that demand cultural awareness in order to discover the impact of oppression and the way to empowerment. Understanding the role of culture in determining racial or ethnic prejudice and the impact of such prejudice on the formation of the self-concept, requires critical pedagogy. The cultural values grounded on ethnic identities, and the cognition that these values are legitimate and worthwhile is only one step towards empowerment. Action must follow. (p. 207)

To develop, affirm, and expand on the minority student perspective, facilitators should collect materials and readings that platform African, African-American, Latino, Chicano, Asian, Asian American, and other intellectual thought through scholarly publications, international press, art, poetry, and activist writing. The intention here is to expose students to materials they rarely read or are exposed to during their university careers thus confirming that "minority positions are sophisticated and often richer with strategies for addressing social problems than dominant discourse and [students] can learn to access such discourses themselves" (Sleeter, 1996, p. 130). Shor (1996) reminds us that,

> a productive, congenial classroom is far more preferable to an unproductive, chilly one, but it takes more than productivity, collaboration, and circle-seating to make a learning process critical or

> empowering. Being busy and collaborative is not the same as being critical of the status quo. The borders of critical culture appear when discourse questions existing knowledge and unequal power relations, when it imagines democratic alternatives departing from authoritarian business-as-usual, when it connects subjectivity to history while relating personal contexts to social contexts and academic contexts, when it situates the theme of social justice at the center of the knowledge-making enterprise. (p.180)

Furthermore, McLaren (1989) calls for an educational process that focuses on the student as a whole with a history and a voice,

> A critical pedagogy situates itself in the intersection of language, culture and history- the nexus in which the students; subjectivities are formed, contested and played out. The struggle is one that involves their history, their language and their culture and the pedagogical implications are such that students are given access to a critical discourse or are conditioned to accept the familiar as the inevitable. Worse still, they are denied a voice with which to be present in the world; they are made invisible to history and rendered powerless to shape it. (p. 233)

Over the years that I have read popular, experiential and critical learning theory, I have always been drawn to the examples, models and cases that put the abstract concepts of the theory into practice. It is much simpler to write or talk about experiential theory and the glories of the critical classroom. But to risk trying out methods, themes, techniques, and materials like a role play and integrate its content into stimulating, effective and meaningful learning experiences is a much more challenging feat. Stabile (1997) gives her thoughts on why this is a challenge,

> Along with institutions like the media, the educational system in this country also teaches students from a very early age to be passive consumers of products, information and politics. Democratic choices are reduced to consumer choices. Students are not encouraged to question the limited menu of choices available to them, but only to resist the most individualized, institutionalized manner. Education in no way encourages students to think of organizations as something they make, but as something made for them. Education manufactures consent and acquiescence to the status quo. (pp. 210-211)

> Can we teach students to act on the information we give them within the context of the [critical] university classroom? Can the divide between theory and practice be bridged within the span of a three- or even four-month semester and in a single course? We can and should analyze the ideological elements of knowledge in the classroom and students can and do become critical thinkers. But for students to transform critical thinking into political action- to act on the information they receive-means moving beyond the immediate context of the institution and learning lessons that cannot be taught in a university classroom. We learn through collective struggle how best to fight against racism, sexism, and homophobia leading to political transformation. (p. 217)

Stabile's questions and hopes are similar to the struggles that many critical educators face. How do we really include students in the making of their education when the system pushes for pre- packaged syllabi and materials that rarely include community and student voices or community projects and experiences? How do we engage students in inquiry, action, and reflection that is transforming for them and the community they are working with? And how can we do this over the course of a semester or two?

Solorzano (1989) developed a Chicano studies course that applied the three phases of Freire's teaching methods: naming the problem, analyzing the causes of the problem, and finding a solution through reflection. Solorzano's course fully incorporated community and student realities (the majority of the students were Chicano from working-class backgrounds) using classroom and supporting materials to analyze the portrayal of Chicanos in the media. As a result of this pedagogy, the author believes that students learned concrete skills of critique and action that allowed them to understand the media and Chicano representation in a different light (Sleeter, 1996).

Reflection through discussion and writing is a core part of the critical classroom. When it comes to developing students' capacity for analysis and inquiry, reflection is a fundamental component. Sleeter (1996) explains that reflection and reflective "writing

allows students to define issues, express feelings and develop descriptive texts for analysis" (p. 129). Students in the critical classes are often asked to keep journals where they reflect on class and community experiences. In addition, they are frequently required to write individual reflection papers comparing and contrasting their own ethnic, cultural and racial experiences with their experiences in the classroom and their community connections. Students are generally encouraged to talk and reflect upon their experiences in the classroom, an article they have read, or a community project they are working in as a way to learn from their experiences.

As educators and scholars, critical theorists often discuss the importance of envisioning new pedagogical spaces within the institution as leading to changes in administration, student, and community relations. There exists a strong belief that educational reform can happen when students are given experiential and critical learning opportunities that incorporate their cultural knowledge and are linked to relevant community action experiences. The visions of Freire (1970) and other critical educators (McLaren, 1988; Giroux, 1997; Shor, 1996) can be put into practice through the acknowledgment that most educational systems tend to benefit particular groups and it is our duty as educators to go against the grain and experiment with alternatives that are inclusive of all students. Shor (1996) and Giroux's (1988) comments support this challenge:

> the borders of critical culture appear when a discourse questions existing knowledge and unequal power relations, when it imagines democratic alternatives departing form authoritarian business as usual, when it connects subjectivity to history while relating personal texts to social contexts and academic texts, when it situates the theme of social justice at the center of the knowledge making enterprise. (Shor, 1996, p. 180)

> Much of the problem of understanding culture in relationship to pedagogy is that culture is rarely examined beyond the constructs of Western anthropological discourse. Consequently this perspective, culture has traditionally been defined as being an all-embracing neutral category. Cultural values are treated as an inventory of discrete, equally important (neutral) phenomena, or as a complex that includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, laws, customs and any other capacity and habit acquired by humans as members of society. What is missing in these studies is any specific reference to the issue of power and its relationship to nature in which cultural relationships are structured and perpetuated within and between groups. Rarely are there questions or challenges about the issue of power and its role in shaping the cultural reality and worldview of groups....There is little attempt to view culture as the shared and lived principles of life, characteristic of different groups and classes as these emerge within asymmetrical relations of power and fields of struggle. (Giroux, 1988, pp. 97-98)

Envisioning alternative learning spaces that question and challenge traditional educational models is what drew me to the critical pedagogy camp because this vision was deeply rooted in the mission of the CIRCLE project. For this reason developing this area as one of the theoretical perspectives in this study seems quite appropriate.

Critiques of Critical Pedagogy

"That all our knowledge begins with experience there can be no doubt. ...no knowledge of ours is antecedent to experience, but begins with it"—Immanuel Kant, The Critique of Pure Reason

While I have found the scholarly discussions of critical pedagogues theoretically illuminating, I feel that there is much less discussion regarding its application to educational practice. Critics have questioned the practical nature of critical pedagogy and claimed that there are serious limitations with some of its key concepts, like the term empowerment. Clarke (1990) sees the overuse and lack of clarity of much of the "buzzness" of critical pedagogy as an academic exercise rather than a process that takes the participants' realities as priority in the research process (p. 389). Clarke goes on to

say that many of the efforts of teachers who proclaim to be practicing critical pedagogy are merely thoughtful teachers who struggle to avoid the structures of a centralized curriculum. Although he applauds their efforts, he stresses that the goals outlined in their models or syllabi are easier put on paper than into practice. Clarke (1990) reminds the reader that critical or emancipatory education takes tremendous amounts of time and flexibility, something that is rarely the luxury of any teacher or trainer. An important point in Clarke's article is that students will not become empowered just like that—in fact he states that they may become skeptical of teachers who try to insinuate that their lives will change by asserting their rights for example. These students may view such an agenda as just another school or teacher thing because their own "experience has taught them [that there can be adverse consequences when you] go ahead and exercise your rights" (p. 392).

Ellsworth's (1989) study at the University of Wisconsin provided a space for students to discuss racism. The author concluded that the critical pedagogy she used in the classroom gave her results opposite to what she had expected. Ellsworth (1989) affirms that the process only reinforced the hierarchical structures in the class and students were unable to move out of their roles. She claims that the literature on liberation pedagogy has developed into an "abstract and utopian line that does not sustain the working of the education its supporters advocate" (p. 297). She continues her critique by saying that empowerment is a key concept that treats the symptoms but "leaves the disease unnamed and untouched" (p. 306). Ellsworth also criticizes the term "the teacher as a learner of the student's reality and knowledge" and the assumption that the teacher and learner re-learn together. Ellsworth considers this just another ploy to get

the student to eventually reach the level of understanding of the teacher (p. 306). Finally, Ellsworth states that critical pedagogy is more appropriate for philosophical debates and abstract concepts like freedom, justice, democracy and universal values. Thinking through and planning classroom practices to support a political agenda, according to the author, requires other more grounding approaches.

Rezai-Rashti (1995), an anti-racist educator and a race and post-colonial theorist, states that for critical pedagogy to make real contributions to the field, scholars need to look at its shortcomings. Rezai-Rashti (1995) continues that critical pedagogy talks about offering a language of possibility but does not discuss how actual classroom practices can lead to student empowerment thus relegating this pedagogy to the domain of the highly abstract and theoretical. Rezai-Rashti claims that we should move away from pedagogy that merely sensitizes and celebrates difference and instead concentrate on the histories and practices of groups and apply this to our classroom curriculum. Instead of viewing racism, for example, as the product of ignorance that is perpetuated by individual prejudice and negative attitudes, anti-racist education argues that the persistence of prejudices must be meet with an analysis of their origins by way of questioning existing social and political structures. Supporting this, Kanpol (1997) claims that "although challenging theoretically dominant social, cultural, and educational paradigms, [critical pedagogues'] insights have sadly effected little societal transformation in the way of the growing despair of poverty, the melanoma of racism and the general malaise that attends a social system characterized as misanthropic and segregated by class, race and gender" (p. ix).

Hirschman (1970), in his seminal work, Exit, Voice and Loyalty: Responses to Decline in Firms, Organizations and States, provides a different theoretical construct for the term voice. The author's concrete and aggressive explanation of voice as agent and participant offers a direct connection to refugee and immigrant history and community actions. Hirschman's theory demonstrates that by viewing the historical circumstances and resulting actions of particular events, such as refugee and immigrant resettlement, we can better understand how different communities developed and gained their socio-political voice in the host society.

Immigration specialists have applied Hirschman's theory as a way to discuss the oppressive conditions of newcomers (i.e., due to a lack of proficiency in a new language and culture and their unfamiliarity with socio-political events) that silence the "voice" of first-generation immigrants and "provide fertile ground for nativist fears and demagoguery to flourish" (Portes & Rumbaut 1996, p. 95). Portes and Rumbaut (1996) further explain that campaigns against the first-generation have generally backfired, only "stirring up ethnic militancy amongst subsequent generations [or children of immigrants as they come of age] leading immigrants to regain their "voice" and reaffirm their identities attacked previously with so much impunity" (p.95). I believe this analysis of voice provides us with an important understanding of the social and political dimensions of immigration. The role the lack of voice and the re-claiming of voice play on the political isolation or integration of immigrants can similarly be applied to their educational experiences at the university. This sociological definition, in my opinion, presents tangible examples of "voice" as seen through the immigrant experience that critical pedagogy does not develop.

As with all paradigms that shape our thinking, I have also found that their critiques are relevant in grounding the practitioner to remind her that a paradigm, a form of pedagogy, or a theory are constructs that guide us as teachers and researchers in our thinking and practice. These constructs should not be taken as the final answer or the rule by which we design and develop all our work. In fact, critiques allow us to see the holes and gaps in ideas and understand what areas still need to be filled in. Critiques of critical pedagogy push us to see that constructs like empowerment or voice still need to be grappled with in the classroom and community not only in papers and books.

Feminist Pedagogy as Complement and Critique

"The introspection and reflection of ourselves with respect to and in spite of things around us, transform these passions into activism, with words and service. It is such activism, guided by our passions that make us eloquent"- Undergraduate student reflection paper.

The writing of feminist theorists and educators has been an influential part of my development as a researcher/practitioner. The growing and everyday more accepted research conducted by feminist scholars provides a vast horizon of cases, stories, vignettes and data where feminist thought and pedagogy challenge and dismantle Euro-centric, male dominated realms of education. Many feminist theorists have agreed that "male" ways of thought permeate our consciousness so deeply that they deny women and people in general an alternate language for self expression (Greene, 1985; Gilligan, 1989; Harding, 1991). Lather (1991) calls on educators to challenge our socially constructed thought processes and look deeply at the complexities and rewards of applying alternative pedagogies that embody feminist values. For example, in developing curriculum, research designs and philosophical position of a CSL class or

project, much of the practice and reflection in this model coincide with Schneidewind's (1987) discussions on educational processes that reflect feminist principles. These included: the development of an atmosphere of mutual respect and trust, the support of an environment that encourages shared leadership, the edification of a cooperative learning structure, the integration of cognitive and affective learning, and the application of action to the learning process.

Feminist pedagogy also focuses on the complexities of raising questions about the multiple identities we embody. This is an area of feminist thinking that moves away from traditional pedagogical discourse where students are seen as homogenous learners. Struggling with the notions of gender, class, race, sexual orientation and ability relations as functions of ongoing oppression (Luke & Gore, 1992 cited in Trifonas, 2003) influence how students and educator can move into zones of greater analysis and understanding. When we focus openly on locating (Rosaldo, 1989; Harding, 1991) ourselves within our multiple identities, we build solidarity and a base that allow students and teachers to take action. Much of our teaching, reflection, and action in CSL should stem from having everyone grapple with the questions of identity as well as the "meanings of identities and subject positions within the culture at large" (Orner, 1992 cited in Sleeter, 1996, p.119). Especially when working with immigrant and refugee students it is important to discuss immigrant identity, hyphenated American identity, gay student identity, second-language learner identity, teacher identity, participant identity, not only from students' own perspectives but also from the perspectives of different members of society.

The scholarly research that analyzes the multiple ways identity can be understood were important to my own development and the development of classroom discussions (hooks, 1981; Trinh, 1989). Inherent in these discussions were conversations about social power and the distribution of power within different groups and contexts. Although there may be moments of discomfort, disagreement and confusion, taking risks we create opportunities where both students and facilitators learned from each other. In turn students validate their experiences and identity as the foundation of becoming facilitators and leaders in their service work with other immigrant communities.

Finally, feminist pedagogues such as Weiler (1988) have discussed the benefits of reflective writing and the use of narrative as a way to highlight the conditions of marginalized females. Borrowing from this work, we encouraged refugee and immigrant students in our courses to use narrative in the broadest sense of the word as a way to become their own authority in writing reflection papers, journals, poetry, taking photography or shooting video. As Smyth (1992) writes, "creating personalized narratives is also a way of guarding against the rampant intellectual imperialism so prevalent in teaching, whereby outsiders provide the packaged and commodified answers to the issues that are non questions for teachers" (cited in Sleeter, 1996, p. 129).

The development of refugee and immigrant student narratives at a public university provides spaces where counter histories can be created and authored as an expression of students' and communities' experiences connected to their learning. Kiang (2000) writes, by "documenting and authorizing student and community voices in turn those voices serve to challenge the validity of dominant paradigms and enable

alternative theories to be grounded" (p. 138.) By prioritizing student experience, reflection, and action through narratives, educators facilitate student-centered pedagogy and research. For this reason I have focused on student narratives as the primary data in this dissertation. More importantly I document and authorize these voices as a way to offer critical community service-learning pedagogy an expanded repertoire when working with refugee and immigrant undergraduate students.

Situated Learning: Peers and Partners in the Learning Process

Situated learning views learning through activity in the company of others as a way for peers to become "productive members in a community of practice" (Bacon, 2002, p. 43). Furthermore, situated learning theory supports educational approaches where learning takes place through proximity and social interactions. Lave and Wenge (1991) look at learning as a social experience. These scholars believe that significant learning takes place when it is situated in interactions among peers and rooted in communities. This school of thought argues that in recognizing the potential of our students and communities in reciprocal, guided relationships and as collective learning communities working together in a particular context, we embrace a model of knowledge development that moves away from traditional, isolated and individual forms of education.

To build and support peer relationships in the classroom implies stepping away from the overwhelming focus on individual achievement and merit that most universities promote. This also implies supporting the concept that learning happens through collective experiences. Cultivating peer relations and group activities amongst students

is another way to challenge traditional models of education and learning theory. Encouraging peers to work together both in the classroom and in their service experience is simultaneously promoting diverse and culturally relevant educational alternatives. Maas Wigert (1998) reminds us, "individualism and consumerism crowds out the metaphors of citizen or neighbor" and the "voices affirming the individualism strand of our tradition seem to be muffling those affirming the community strand (p. 3).

Complementing the work of critical and experiential learning, situated learning theories provide a valuable lens through which to assess the learning that takes place in classrooms that focus on community outreach and service (Wolfson & Willinsky, 1998). Lave and Wenger (1991) are central figures in the development of theories related to social interactions in specific contexts and their effects on learning (situated learning). Lave and Wenger (1991) claim that learning in a particular context is centered on the social relationships in that context. Social relationships mark how we make sense of our surroundings and how we ultimately learn. These scholars believe that it is through "mediated learning", learning with peers and mentors that act as models that learning occurs.

For Bandura (1986) effective mentors or models are individuals who demonstrate efficacy in the role they model and who share similar traits with the learner. Bandura asserts that learning is augmented by the quality of the relationship between the learner and the model. Bandura (1986) states that being in quality peer "relationships serve as vehicles for personal changes" (p. 34). Lave and Wenger (1991) further suggest that learning may be quite effective even among near peers interacting as models for one another.

Lave and Wenger (1991) advanced the critical notion that "learning is not only significant for the skills or processes that we acquire but for the social relations we experience through learning" (p. 52). For these cognitive psychologists, learning is not demonstrated solely by what we are able to do but with whom we are able to relate to and do the activity with. Moreover, these scholars assert that building social relationships contributes to identity formation concluding that learning and identity are inseparable and in fact "aspects of the same phenomenon" (p. 115).

Lave and Wenger's (1991) work emphasizes that the context where action takes place is the regulator for determining how cognitive processes occur. The situated learning school believes that cognition is not solely an internalized, psychological process but is inherently context-dependent and interactive. Other situated cognition scholars have stated that cognition is essentially a cultural phenomenon existent in relations among people, acting in culturally organized settings (Wertsch, 1990). Again this school of thought claims that learning and knowing take place when people interact with each other in specific contexts. Thus the context and the relations amongst peers are seen as inseparable from the cognitive and learning processes. Situated learning theory challenges conventional assumptions that knowledge can be abstracted from contexts or that learning can take place apart from a specific setting. Instead knowledge is seen as something that exists in interaction among individuals, their activities, and the context in which these activities take place. In Situated Learning, Lave and Wenger (1991) view learning as the process where learners become part of a "community of practice" (p. 29). Lave and Wenger (1991) concur that learning is not merely a condition

for membership, but is itself an evolving form of membership, where "identity, knowing and social membership entail one another" (p. 53).

Vygotsky (1974) and Bakhtin (1981) were the forerunners on viewing the socio-cultural approach to cognitive development as a mediated action. Vygotsky claims that human action is mediated through tools and signs (i.e., language, peers, visual images, etc.). The connection of learning linked to guided action was firmly established by Vygotsky as a result of his research with preschool children who were facilitated in their learning in contrast with older children left to learn on their own. Bakhtin (1981) emphasizes the relationship between discourse and socio-cultural contexts and consequently the relationship between the speaker and the social group with whom the speaker communicates. Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992) focus on the community as a collective source of mediated action that is acquired through familial, relational and peer networks. Trueba and Zou's (1994) study on Miao minority students at an urban university in China asserts similar claims. In their research, Trueba and Zou (1994) firmly demonstrate that the knowledge gained in relationships of reciprocity and networking provided the strong collective support needed by minority students to succeed at the university.

In addition, Vygotsky (1962; 1978) developed the theory of the zone of proximal development that focuses on the critical relationship between cognitive and social phenomena, a theory that has been applied and advanced by many educators. The zone of proximal development is defined as the distance between the child's "actual development level as determined by independent problem solving" and the higher level of "potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance

or in the collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86, cited in Trueba and McLaren, 2000, p. 60-61).

Tejada, Espinoza and Gutierrez (2003) also look to Vygotsky who has probably had the greatest influence on situated learning theory to date. These authors support critical, or in the authors' terminology, decolonizing pedagogy that espouses creating spaces of change where students at the margins can act and be heard. They write,

> decolonizing pedagogy that requires a re-conceptualization of the social organization of learning in schooling, institutions and fundamentally in the classrooms, a transformation in the social and intellectual relationships among the participants both in schools and in the particular communities in which the schools reside. Conceptualizing teaching and learning as fundamentally situated and socially mediated forces us to always ground instructional practices in present and past realities of teachers and students and to organize learning in ways that promote and assist their potential. (p. 35)

Tejada, Espinoza and Guiterrez (2003) continue by explaining the relational nature of teaching, learning and culture in human development as embedded in the everyday practice of activity with learning partners:

> Scholars in this field encourage educators to organize learning within our students' social, cultural and historical realities and promote learning contexts that lead to critical consciousness guided by action. Moreover, social interaction theory supports the idea that through the potential of each participant and the guidance and knowledge of peers, learning partners are capable of developing new social relations and systems of activity that can challenge social inequality. (p. 33)

Scholars assert that it is through students' collective action linked to learning that social change has the greatest potential. As educators engaged in the area of situated learning theory we must take very seriously the context and the conditions of the context where learning takes place, be it in the classroom or the community.

Torres-Guzman, Mercado, Helvia-Quintero, and Rivera-Viera (1994) claim that students working as peers in a socially and culturally familiar context can lead to educational change. This study focused on teaching and learning in various Puerto Rican and Latino collaborative projects. It demonstrated that students who were encouraged to learn with the assistance of more capable others and who understood that they could learn from these peers and their parents, remained more focused on the learning tasks at hand, explored and took advantage of a variety of opportunities presented to them and finally reflected on what they did and what they learned. The authors of the study developed a three-part curriculum:

1. Student Experience Approach

2. Leadership for Community Development as Empowerment

3. Reflections.

These curricular areas purposefully aimed to facilitate children in developing their Puerto Rican and Latino identities within culturally familiar contexts. Ultimately the researchers observed students integrating as opposed to assimilating into the city and schools where they lived. Torres-Guzman, Mercado, Helvia-Quintero and Rivera-Viera (1994) conclude that,

> educational research on teaching and learning must not only analyze the different contexts of education, but must focus on creating fundamentally new and challenging instructional activities and environments. The transformation of practice invariably results in the transformation of the contexts of research. Changes in educational practices and theories about changing practice must legitimately emerge from the collaborative attempts with teachers and others to modify and improve practice within specific social and historical circumstances. (p. 94)

Valverde (1998) and Contreras (1998) both write about the importance of mentoring and peer relations at the university level. They concur that students of color

who see other people of color in positions of authority and status will be "motivated to achieve and [engage their mentors as] sounding boards for the many problems they face in higher education" (Contreras, 1998, p. 138). Valverde sees mentoring as one of three connecting strategies for creating social change on university campuses. In addition to networking and ad hoc relations, Valverde considers mentoring a critical step toward building a supportive environment for students of color. Faculty of color "especially take on the role of mentoring students of color" (Lesage, Ferber, Storrs & Wong, 2002, p. 179) to guide them in their academic work and to encourage them to become support systems amongst themselves.

In their review of the literature, Lesage, Ferber, Storrs and Wong (2002) describe the Minority Student Persistence Model developed by Swail and Holmes (2000) (p.180). This model focuses on a series of concrete objectives that universities should consider when developing a diversity plan. This model points to academic services, curriculum and instruction and student services as the areas that most need to be revised and enhanced to foment academic and social environment changes that benefit all students but racially and ethnically diverse students in particular. According to Lesage, Ferber, Storrs and Wong, (2002) greater importance must be placed on giving incentives and resources to "faculty for transforming the curriculum and mentoring students" (p. 180). In addition, these authors used student narratives as a significant part of their book to "demonstrate the importance of a comprehensive curriculum that integrates the study of people of color and women" (Lesage, Ferber, Storrs & Wong, 2002, p. 180). CIRCLE's mission coincided with this argument. In fact we went one step further. We believed that curriculum should be inclusive of diverse realities but that it should also embrace a

service-learning approach that engages students of color as peers and mentors in community organizing activities with racially, ethnically and economically similar groups.

Lesage, Ferber Storrs, and Wong (2002) write, " to create change, we must alter the paths of least resistance, which on college campuses can only occur if our efforts are comprehensive and across the institution, reinforced in the classroom, department meetings, student government meetings, committee meetings, review processes, hiring discussions and cultural events" (p. 201). It seems that rethinking the role of peers as learning partners in the university classroom could be one such path of least resistance.

In this section I have tried to describe various positions that support mentoring and building peer relations with familiar and similar and racially and ethnically diverse university students and the learning that takes place amongst peers and mentors. Situated learning theory informs this perspective particularly well by demonstrating that enhanced learning does take place when students are engaged in activities through the guidance of capable peers in specific contexts.

Funds of Knowledge in Action and Reflection

The anthropological concept, funds of knowledge (Olmedo, 1997; Velez-Ibanez, 1995; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992; Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992) recognizes, respects and includes the strategic and cultural resources that racially and ethnically diverse and low-income students and communities possess. Funds of knowledge have been defined as "the strategic and cultural resources that a household or community contain" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 313). This theoretical frame

emerged from the study and advocacy for diverse communities of color. The funds of knowledge concept not only provides educators with a basis for understanding the cultural systems of diverse students but also presents important and useful insight for cultivating the cultural assets of students in the classroom and in their community service. An important assumption underlying the funds of knowledge concept is that "communities know many things and have many skills; yet this wisdom is generally not recognized as relevant to the educational process in schools" (Olmedo, 1997, p. 550).

Velez Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) state that

> grasping the social relationships in which youth are ensconced and the broad features of learning generated in the home [and community] are key if we are to understand the construction of cultural identity and the emergence of cultural personality (p. 313)

of racially and ethnically diverse students. By exploring how historical, political and economic forces transform the cultural and behavior practices of a particular group, Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) claim educators can more deeply understand the "wider set of social activities and the specific strategic bodies of essential information that households need to maintain their well-being" (p. 314). Ultimately the funds of knowledge concept "affirms the elements of the daily lifestyle of families in the community as legitimate sources of knowledge, a kind of cultural capital that can be tapped by teachers to improve the educational processes of the schools" (Olmedo, 1997 p. 550).

Through a series of cases studies Velez-Ibanez and Greenberg (1992) conclude, however, that schools and educational authorities are not tapping into the resources of diverse students and their communities. Based on their analysis they demonstrate a clear need for educational reform. First, these researchers' findings point to shifting how

racially and ethnically diverse students (in their case Mexican and Mexican-American students) are evaluated advocating more mediated and dynamic forms of assessment. Second, they concluded that a closer analysis of the cultural bias of instruction and pedagogy is necessary. Thirdly, the authors call for further research that focuses on the "nature of the social relations between the Mexican children, their parents and the educational institutions that serve them" (p. 329). Finally, their study has implications for teacher training, calling on universities to provide teachers with the opportunities to learn how to incorporate the funds of knowledge from their students' households and communities into the curriculum.

The funds of knowledge concept is a powerful pedagogical frame when working with diverse student communities. Educators can support an alternative educational paradigm by legitimizing students' funds of knowledge in the classroom and encouraging them to explore these funds through their community and cultural contexts. As an example, Olmedo (1997) documents integrating students' community histories and the concept of funds of knowledge into the curriculum. Olmedo's (1997) approach tests the "pedagogical use of oral history and the implications of the funds of knowledge concept for restructuring school curricula and challenging assumptions about [immigrant] families" (p. 551). The researcher justifies her project stating,

> given the changing demographics of our school population, it becomes even more critical for teachers to find ways to address the discontinuities between the home, [community] and school. One way of doing this is to identify elements of the students' lived experiences, including those of their families, which can be integrated into the school curriculum and serve as a scaffold for developing academic knowledge and skills. (p. 551)

Olmedo found that the "funds of knowledge of a community are the ways that members organize themselves to deal with the difficulties imposed on them by economic and sociopolitical realities" and that these funds are "based on the reliance on extended family, the critical role that women played within various networks and the creative approaches that they developed to negotiate a new environment" (p. 570).

Torres-Guzman, Mercado, Helvia-Quintero and Rivera-Viera (1994), in a case study working with a community project in Arizona, found that the funds of knowledge that participant households possessed called for a perception shift from educational institutions so teachers and administrations would see community households as having strength, power, and resources that schools could not ignore. In this study, community social networks formed the context for the transmission of knowledge, skills, information, and assistance. Indeed, the researchers viewed this exchange of funds of knowledge as a major strategy to deal with the lack of community resources. These funds also served as a strategy to harness, control, and manipulate the few resources that were at their disposal. The community's educational challenge was to get teachers, students, and parents to access, share, and integrate these different funds. Teachers formed study groups with parents and students to see how their different forms of community knowledge could be incorporated into school curriculum and activities.

In another case, Torres-Guzman, Mercado, Helvia-Quintero and Rivera-Viera (1994) describe how students from the University of Puerto Rico developed projects with local schools. These projects aimed at making schoolwork more relevant to grade school children's needs and potentials. One example described using cooperative learning and visual and language arts as vehicles for university students and working

class pupils to conduct a research project around the history and life of a neighborhood hero, Ismael Rivera, a salsa musician. Topics they discussed and researched included Rivera's schooling, drug problems, talents in music etc. Students used community-mapping techniques as a way to explore neighborhood expressions around words like *ambiente* (atmosphere, environment, feeling) and guide pupils to see the positive aspects of their community, music and sense of family.

Olmedo (1997) reminds us that the daily and historical experiences versus foods and festivals curriculum can "provide a wealth of knowledge that has relevance to many areas of the school curriculum" (p. 569). In her article, Olmedo (1997) gives the example of a student who interviewed his Puerto Rican grandfather and came back with a story that conflicted with the World War II version he had been taught in his New York City high school history class. As the student and teacher explored the grandfather's story they encountered a rich counter history related to colonialism. The grandfather's negative reaction to his World War II experiences was directly linked to his anti-colonialist views and the 1917 passage of the Jones Act. This enactment forced Puerto Ricans to become U.S. citizens and thus made them eligible for the draft into U.S. military service. Making sense of historical events through the experiences of relatives and community members by conveying these histories as central themes in student narratives is another way that teachers can utilize the funds of knowledge of households and communities.

Witherell and Noddings (1991) highlight and support the value and application of narratives in education:

> the power of narrative and dialogue as contributors to reflective awareness in teachers and students is that they provide opportunities for deepened

> relations with others and serve as springboards for ethical action. Understanding the narrative and contextual dimensions of human actors can lead to new insights, compassionate judgment and the creation of shared knowledge and meanings that can inform professional practice. (p. 8)

These authors add that "the stories we hear and the stories we tell shape the meaning and texture of our lives at every stage and juncture" (p. 1). In Witherell and Noddings' opinion, three major themes support the relevance of narratives in education practice. These include: 1. narrative is a primary tool in the work that educators do, 2. caring and dialogue through narrative are critical aspects of educational practice and 3. narrative and dialogue can serve as a model for teaching and learning (p. 2-3).

Delgado-Gaitan (1994) also demonstrates the importance of narratives in understanding immigrant community, family, and school relations. Her research on family cultural narratives (*consejos*, nurturing advice, and *dichos*, expressions) shows that teachers and school systems need to better acknowledge the vital role that narratives play in immigrant family empowerment in addition to "serving as motivational strategies for students' educational efforts" (p. 302).

Important possibilities emerge for understanding diverse student reality and developing culturally appropriate curriculum when students tell a story or develop a community or self-narrative that conveys their "funds of knowledge". Exploring how funds of knowledge are articulated through narratives can lead to new and distinct models for classroom and community curriculum.

Basing his research with Southeast Asia refugee and immigrant university students, Kiang (1992) focuses on the realities of sacrifice and survival that characterize the lives of many first-generation students despite the myths that Asian students are

whizzes and have no problems in school. In his analysis Kiang looks at the multiplicity of refugee and immigrant students' "needs as well as a range of strengths that reflect various dimensions of their historical and cultural backgrounds, their individual identities and their social realties" (p. 103). Kiang (1992) developed four dimensions that provide a framework for researchers and teachers to further explain Southeast Asian refugee experiences. These dimensions include students as Southeast Asians, as refugees, as new immigrants, and as racial minorities.

By applying dimensions such as those mentioned above or having students create their own dimensions, educators offer students opportunities to explore specific yet different personal and community issues. Moreover, encouraging students to develop multiple categories through which to describe, talk about, and understand the "self" supports recent scholarship that "questions the fixedness of identity categories as well as their salience in social life" (Hoffman, 1998, p. 325). Instead researchers are pushing away from the binary, essentialized categories of identity to models focused on individual agency and subjectivity (Tanaka, 2003). From this kind of insider perspective students can utilize the different dimensions of their personal and community stories to articulate the funds of knowledge that shape their experiences.

In addition to many of the same teaching and curricular suggestions made in the critical and experiential learning section of this chapter (supportive learning environment, peer support, critical discussions, problem solving skills building etc.), Kiang (1992) emphasizes the importance of integrating refugee and immigrant experiences, histories and contemporary community issues into the curriculum. Kiang views this as a way for students to,

> develop a historical and social analysis of the Asian American experience that they are then able to apply to their own lives. This helps students realize that the problems they face are largely not of their own making. With a clear analysis they have the capacity to address many of these problems more effectively and also to understand why some can not be solved by their own individual efforts. (p. 104-105)

Kiang's (1992) research concludes with the following findings,

- The college experience of Asian immigrant and refugee students at an urban public university is characterized by struggle and survival rather than success, by complex and multifaceted issues of identity and alienation and by changing relations and gender roles (p. 110).

- To understand and improve the college experiences of first generation Asian immigrant and refugee students we must examine the role of teaching and the curriculum (p. 104).

- In particular, curricular reform and implementation of Asian American studies programs may provide the much-needed content and a supportive learning environment that will enable first-generation Asian students to establish new roots and develop new voices so that they, in turn, may transform both themselves and their college experience (p.110).

Kiang's conclusions concur with many of the issues and conflicts that arise for students in centers like CIRCLE. Often students feel overwhelmed by the college experience and the lack of opportunity to discuss their complex and multi-dimensional histories, community stories and funds of knowledge.

A major challenge placed before educators lies in the willingness of institutions and teachers to embrace and integrate students' funds of knowledge into educational programs. This is a will grounded in not only doing something different educationally rather a will hinged on commitments of politics and social justice. Teaching in this way also means investing in the preparation, research, time, and tension required to do something different. bell hooks (1994) writes,

> a commitment to engaged pedagogy is an expression of political activism. Given that our educational institutions are so deeply invested in a banking

> system, teachers are more rewarded when we do not teach against the grain. The choice to work against the grain, to challenge the status quo, often has negative consequences. And that is part of what makes that choice one that is not politically neutral. (p. 203)

Choosing alternative approaches for, let's say, understanding history, presenting contemporary employment situations, or engaging refugee and immigrant students in community organizing projects will lead to counter-readings of status quo issues. In turn these situations will force teachers, students, institutions, and communities to think and act differently about the educational circumstances and opportunities that arise.

Different pedagogical approaches excite and engage students. In my experience students become incredibly animated when their community and personal funds of knowledge are recognized and acknowledged. Often this knowledge has been overlooked, buried, taken for granted, or discredited. Whether the approach to do this is an oral history project, a mapping activity, a writing exercise about identity, or telling a story, alternative narratives emerge. Using such approaches are ways for educators to tap into, as Olmedo (1997) writes, our students' funds of knowledge, the alternative expressions of knowledge rarely printed in standard textbooks.

Gates (1992) calls writing about community, self, and the exploration of funds of knowledge, a form of constructing authentic identities. Gates (1992) asserts that every community and individual has the power to contribute to major projects of literature and artistic production. Moreover, he states that this process allows marginalized groups to "write themselves into being: appropriating the negative, inaccurate and twisted images that the dominant society has imposed" (p. 57). Trueba (1994) writes that the "very possibility of developing a positive self-concept and ethnic identity depends on the recognition and celebration of one's own social, linguistic, and cultural heritage" (p.

380). According to Kanpol (1997) "narrative allows the subject to be his or her own authority" (p. 14). As a result, the "subject's life stories and meaning structures link human phenomena into comprehensible endeavors" (p. 14).

Storrs and Lesage (2002) nuance the discussion on narratives by explaining their potential to link differing human experiences to events that make particular sense in the lives of students of color. They write,

> narratives encourage students to construct a sense of self that is no longer based on notions of hierarchy with the concomitant requirement that some people be cast as unequal and inferior. In addition they encourage the construction of more fluid boundaries of belonging that go beyond a particular skin color shade. Students of color here tell new stories of belonging based on a unified experience of exclusion and oppression along many group dimensions, yet one that is characterized by internal diversity. In other words while all students of color share a common experience of being treated as the other they differ in terms of how they respond to the positioning, the degree to which they experience the other and their understanding of this difference. (p.111)

Different narrative forms allow students to explore and embrace their various funds of knowledge. As I've already mentioned, narratives can be a written history project, a journal entry or a reflective writing exercise. Narratives can be oral stories that are told one on one or in a group setting. Narratives can be sung, recited as poetry, rap or spoken word, taped and listened to, or presented in visual form. One of my students even talked about narratives evolving through the sense of smell. "I get frustrated at myself for forgetting an important part of my life. Now the only things that reminds me of the past and Vietnam are the smells of guava fruit" (student interview).

Bigler (1996) writes that personal narratives reveal a presentation of self both to the presenter and to others. This is important as it "helps us organize and make sense of our world and where we fit into it" (p. 187). Indeed, the author goes on to say, narratives

have strategic value because as we exchange narratives we move others to see our perspectives and to learn from our worldviews. Eisenhart's (1995) research similarly concluded that stories of self are ways through which individuals organize culture. In addition, Eisenhart (1995), using Lave's (1991) construct of mediated learning, claims that stories of self "affect the cultural worlds of those who tell them and those who hear them" (p. 8). Therefore telling a story or developing a community or self-narrative has the potential to mediate how learning in a particular context takes place.

Teachers who encourage the use of narratives that personalize and recognize students' experiences are working towards dismantling the systems that continue to omit and silence particular groups. Both Conchran-Smith (1994) and Ng (2003) call this "teaching against the grain." Ng (2003) writes,

> to be against the grain is to recognize that the routinized courses of action and interaction in all educational contexts are imbued with unequal distribution of power that produce and reinforce various forms of marginalization and exclusion. (p. 215)

Thus, a commitment to student narrative that captures student's funds of knowledge is an intervention and an action that teachers and students can apply as they push toward educational and social change.

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) view visual narratives like photography as "key documents in the context of narrative inquiry" and as "artifacts collected in our lives, that provide a rich source of memories" (p. 114). Photography can be viewed as both as an art and as a science because it captures and reproduces reality. As students study photography and visit galleries and exhibits, they recognize that photography serves many human needs, both practical and emotional. For example photography plays a vital role in helping to maintain records, in preserving cultural heritage, in developing

industry, in learning for medical purposes and for keeping records of special occasions. Photography provides students with the thrill of catching and freezing a moment, a scene, a smile, a movement, and then looking back at it. Photography is also a personal and creative expression. Students can reproduce moments in the lives of their community and invite their parents, fellow community members, university administrations, faculty, and others to view how they see their world when encouraged to use their expertise and funds of knowledge.

There are strong implications for classroom learning and community activism when visual narratives and imagery are used. In the field of psychology much has been written about the power of pictures and imagery. Paivo (1971) explains that knowledge is stored in permanent memory as images referred to as *imagens*. These *imagens* are "not merely mental pictures rather they are composed of mental images, smells, tastes, sounds and kinesthetic sensations" and "images are absolutely necessary for understanding" the world around us (cited in Ewy, 2003). I believe filmmakers like Michael Moore and others (J.T. Takagi of Third World Newsreel, Emiko Omori, etc.) are ultimately educators who understand the potential for change that visual narratives and imagery can bring about. Integrating these media with racial and ethnically diverse student education offer added avenues for institutional change. Prosser (1997) writes,

> Over the last three decades qualitative researchers have given serious thought to using images with words to enhance understanding of the human condition. They encompass a wide range of forms including films, photographs, drawings, cartoons, graffiti, maps, diagrams, signs and symbols. Taken cumulatively images are signifiers of a culture; taken individually they are artifacts that provide us with very particular information about our existence. Images provide researchers with a different order of data and, more importantly, an alternative to the way we have perceived data in the past. (p. 2)

Richardson (2000) notes narratives and stories have a transformational potential at the individual level of the author and "reader's" consciousness and at a social level that can lead both to action. Narratives come in multiple forms. The written, oral, visual and sensory narrative of the self and community has the potential to facilitate a public, collective or institution presentation and understanding of hidden or ignored individual and/or community realities. Ultimately student narratives are capable of conveying the exploration and application of students' funds of knowledge. This process can lead to different relations between and amongst diverse university students and impact students' academic experiences while positively enhancing their community engagement.

Summary

I have chosen these three theories because I believe together they provide a useful analytical frame that explains and supports my research. At certain points the theories intersect and inform one another. At other junctures each theory stands on its own as a lens that provides distinct theoretical guidance for this dissertation. In the next few paragraphs I will attempt to provide a summary of these converging and diverging points as a kind of matrix to navigate the reader.

As I mentioned earlier, I have been draw to critical pedagogy and experiential learning theory for a few main reasons. These include the challenges these theories place before educators and scholars to envision new pedagogical spaces within our learning institutions. Spaces that can challenge and change traditional Euro-centric models of education, its administrative practices, and its student and community relations. These theoretical perspectives advocate that educational reform can happen when teachers

create experiential and critical learning opportunities that incorporate students' cultural knowledge and expertise and are linked to relevant community action experiences.

Freire (1970) and other critical educators (McLaren, 1988; Giroux, 1997; Shor, 1996) acknowledge that most educational systems tend to give preference to individuals from dominant social groups. Indeed this theory recognizes that only by shifting the historical exclusion of diverse students from university life, the curriculum, research, and knowledge production, can universities become democratic centers of learning. Therefore this framework calls on educators to go against the grain of traditional education and experiment with alternative models that support action, experience, reflection, and other multiple forms of knowing.

Situated-learning theory firmly agrees with critical pedagogy that learning takes place through action, experience and reflection. However, the major contribution of situated learning theory is the belief that learning takes place through social interactions in specific contexts. In this sense situated learning expands on critical learning theory by stressing the social and cognitive value of learning with peers and mentors in a particular setting. For my research I have found this theory to be particularly illuminating as it highlights the importance of how social relationships allow us to understand our surroundings and ultimately facilitate our learning. In fact, scholars like Badura (1986) coincide with the peer building approach of the educational project in this study. This approach views effective mentors or peer models as individuals who can positively influence the learning of others through their example and who share similar traits with the learners. In CIRCLE we also believed that learning is enhanced when peers from like ethnic communities interact as models for one another. In contrast to the notion that

higher education learning should take place in isolated, competitive and individual domains, this educational learning theory supports the idea that quality peer-learning relationships can actually lead to academic success and even institutional change (Trueba & Zou, 1994; Bandura, 1986).

The final theory I develop in this chapter looks at funds of knowledge. This theory specifically focuses on the strategic and cultural resources that every individual or community possess. These resources are described as the repertoire of assets that individuals and communities access to support, complement and advance learning and community development. Although critical learning theory does not delve specifically into the aspect of resources, it does support the tenets that learning and knowledge spring from an acknowledgement and understanding of our experiences and place in the world. Situated learning theory highlights the importance of social interactions and familial and relational networks in the learning process, an area also developed by authors in the funds of knowledge field (Moll, et al. 1992). Nevertheless, this anthropological construct pays specific and detailed attention to the reservoir of resources that each individual and community have and the role of educators in developing creative, respectful and exciting means and methods to integrate these resources into the curriculum so that diverse communities knowledge systems are fully legitimized and utilized.

In the following chapter I look at various trends in the community service-learning field and the how these three educational learning theories offer additional ways to reflect on this area of study.

CHAPTER 4

THE EMERGENCE OF A NEW COMMUNITY SERVICE-LEARNING PEDAGOGY

This chapter begins with an overview of contemporary trends in community service-learning. Subsequently, I discuss how the three educational learning theories described in the previous chapter offer university educators and administrators innovative and alternative ways to think about service-learning pedagogy when working with diverse university students and communities of color.

Community Service-Learning Trends

> Service-learning means a method under which students learn and develop through thoughtfully organized service that is conducted in and meets the needs of a community and is coordinated with an institution of higher education, and with the community; helps foster civic responsibility; is integrated into and enhances the academic curriculum of the students enrolled; and includes structured time for students and the community to reflect on the service experience. (American Association for Higher Education (AAHE): Series on Service-Learning in the Disciplines [adapted from the National and Community Service Trust Act of 1993])

Associations between universities and communities have a long a history in the United States. For over a century, scholars like Dewey have promoted relationships between the two as a means to reestablish the role of communities and universities as co-participants in political, social and educational decision-making. Over the past two decades policy makers, politicians, communities, university administrators and scholars have taken a renewed interest in community and university relations and public service as an integrated component of the academic curriculum. Community-service learning (CSL) is a term that can be heard across most universities today. Many campuses boast of centers supporting community service-learning or research agendas focused on civic

and community issues linked to service. The definitions and interpretations of community service-learning are as vast as the growing body of research in this area. For this study I prefer to define community service-learning as a pedagogical model that intentionally integrates academic learning and relevant community service with a focus on developing relationships of reciprocity and mutual learning across communities and campuses (Rhoads & Howard, 1998).

In 1984 the National Society for Experiential Education and the Council for Adult Experiential Learning COOL (campus outreach opportunity league) was formed to educate and empower students to strengthen the nation through service. Presently nearly a thousand university presidents are members of Campus Compact, an organization created in 1985 to expand opportunities on campuses for public and community service in higher education. More recently, the National and Community Service Act in 1990 allocated significant federal funds for service-learning programs at the K-12 and higher education levels. In 1993 the Clinton administration expanded this legislation, creating the Corporation for National and Community Service to administer organizations that merge community service and academic learning.

Boyer (1990), in Scholarship Reconsidered: Priorities of the Professoriate, called on the academy to turn its attention and resources to the compelling needs of contemporary society. Cultural critiques of higher education have questioned how universities are preparing students for active roles in public and civic life. These critiques have contributed to the shift in university positions on learning that embraces mutual engagement with communities. In step with the national wave of interest in community service-learning pedagogy and the accompanying federal and state support,

universities have expanded their service-learning centers and have begun to incorporate service-learning approaches into the undergraduate curriculum.

University mission statements generally include sections that detail their relationship to the community and public service. Indeed higher education has often been referred to as a three-part equation encompassing teaching, research, and service. Of these three elements, however, service has generally received the least attention. Establishing an integrated educational approach where teaching, research, and service stand on equal footing within university culture continues to be one of the greatest challenges of our higher education system (Maurrasse, 2001). While some institutions are strongly grounded in an ethic of service, others only rhetorically fulfill their service missions through research or student contact (Ward, 1996). Despite the increased interest in and application of community service-learning at the undergraduate education level, few universities have made CSL a standard campus-wide practice (Prins, 2002; Holland, 2000; Ramaley, 2000).

Still community service-learning is catching on across most campuses. As CSL programs spring up at universities so too has the scholarly literature dedicated to examining service-learning theory and practice. In fact there has been an explosion of research (including a scholarly journal dedicated solely to the topic) that analyzes a multitude of issues related to the field. Examples of research include: the impact and effect of service-learning on students (Eyler, Giles & Braxton, 1997), communities and their members (Marurrassee, 2001; Cruz & Giles, 2000; Veron & Ward, 1999), faculty (Abes, Jackson & Jones, 2002; Driscoll, 2000) educational institutions (Prins, 2002; Holland, 2000, Reardon, 1997; Ward, 1996), pedagogy (Hayes & Cuban, 1997) and

research (Strand, Marullo, Cutforht, Stoecker & Donohue, 2003; Howard, Gelmon & Giles, 2000). In addition, scholars and research councils have promoted inquiry in the areas of theory, program models, effect on student learning, community impact, student and community participation in research, overviews of best practices, and the impact of service learning on institutions, to name a few (Howard, Gelmon & Giles, 2000). According to Chesler and his associates (2003),

> institutions of higher education today have become heightened arenas for discussion, debate and struggle around concerns about unequal primary and secondary schooling, race and class based admissions, biases in standardized tests, the monocultural canon, and even the priority for campus diversity and multiculturalism have gained prominence. Community service learning (CSL) programs carry the potential to help students learn about and speak to these diversity-related issues in concrete and experiential terms. (p. 1)

When we look more closely at the service-learning field, however, we can see various gaps. Little research has been conducted on the experiences of racially and ethnically diverse students engaged in community service-learning experiences (Hayes & Cuban, 1997; Roose, 1997; Calderon, 1996; Cohen, 1995). A few studies look at race, gender, and other constructed differences as they relate to service-learning research (Chelser & Vasques Scalera, 2000). One study specifically analyzes a race relations social science course that engaged students in service-learning experiences with youth of color (Coles, 1999). Additional research focuses on the attitudinal shifts of students as they are exposed to the concepts of white privilege, structural disparities in the communities they work and institutional racism in connection with a service-learning component (Moley, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Ilustre, 2002; Greene, 2001; Dunlap, 1998, Rhoads, 1998; Myers-Lipton, 1996; Sleeter, 1996).

The majority of these studies, however, view service-learning as an opportunity for students "to interact with communities that are different and unfamiliar to them and to reflect critically upon their experiences and acquire knowledge" with the hope that this experience will "enhance students' personal growth and their individual understanding and competence with respect to the culture or community and their course materials" (Dunlap, 1998, p. 58). The overwhelming number of studies I reviewed discuss the experiences of predominately white middle-class university students engaging in service-learning relationships with communities of color in marginalized and oppressed neighborhoods or schools (Moley, McFarland, Miron, Mercer, & Ilustre, 2002; Green, 2001; Eyler & Giles, 1999, Dunlap, 1998; Hayes & Cuban, 1997; Coles, 1997; Myers-Lipton, 1996; Aparicio & Jose-Kampfner, 1995; Fox, 1994) (in each study listed university students of color represented less than 10-15% of the student sample).

These studies conclude that service-learning opportunities significantly impact students' understanding of white middle-class privilege, offer new ways to think about race-relations, opened up discussions regarding socio-economic and gender inequalities across communities and provide spaces for increased dialogue and contact across diverse social groups. On the one hand these are important learning milestones for students who have limited opportunities to interact with people from racially, ethnically and economically different backgrounds. On the other hand, CSL research has not fully grappled with the multiple contradictions and conflicts that surface in a CSL relationship where students from predominately white middle-class backgrounds engage with communities that are poor and often racially and ethnically diverse (Hondagneu-Sotelo& Raskoff, 1994). Moeley, McFarland, Miron, Mercer & Ilustre (2002) add that if not

properly planned, "service-learning experiences can maintain the [social] power dynamic between white college students and the individuals with whom they work" (p. 24).

Fox (1994) argues that service-learning contexts where diverse social dynamics are at play need to be thought through with much care. Students need time and space to actively learn about and question structural components and causes that shape community reality. At the same time students need to be exposed to critiques of traditional models of charity and service that western societies have reproduced time and time again, models where white middle-class individuals go out to help improve the "deficient" community. Elby (1998) cautions that "an inadequately planned and organized [service] experience might actually individualize social issues, de-emphasizing structural components and causes and thereby reinforce students' views that community members are deficient" (cited in Galinni & Moely, 2003, p. 5). As a consequence, more and more service-learning scholars are stressing that teachers applying CSL help their learners comprehend the implications of white privilege and the multiple social forces that shape the culture and lives of the community members they work with (Green, 2001).

Only a few studies (Regmi, 2004; Hayes and Cuban, 1997; Roose, 1997; Calderon, 1996; Cohen, 1995) have described service-learning initiatives with ethnically and racially diverse university students working with communities that reflect their social, ethnic, racial, economic and cultural identities. Regmi (2004) describes the experiences of students of color engaged with like communities in a transformational service-learning model. Hayes and Cuban (1997) apply the metaphors of border crossing

and borderlands to identify key elements of critical pedagogy that can be incorporated into a service-learning model when working with diverse students. Calderon (1996) noted that service-learning often provides opportunities for students of color to feel validated and supported (cited in Enos, 1999). Cohen (1995) found that "students of color gained an increased sense of identity when they worked with racially and ethnically diverse students as well as an ability to identify and articulate the social injustices" they experienced first-hand (cited in Chelser & Vasquez Scalera, 2000, p. 21). Finally, Roose (1997) attributed increased African-American university student retention rates with their service-learning experiences with like communities. In my review of the literature, however, the CSL research continues to focus primarily on the experiences of white middle-class students working with poor communities of color.

Coles (1999) develops an analysis of diverse student participation (or lack there of) in service-learning programs and raises some important questions as to why students of color may not engage as readily as their white peers in these courses. Her findings include diverse students' work commitments and time limitations, a tradition of service to their own communities outside the university and their lack of connection to the white establishment service-learning opportunities as a few factors that may contribute to low participation. Cummings (2000) makes the important observation that undergraduate students in service-learning experiences still overwhelmingly participate in

> soup kitchens, pound nails with future owners of Habitat for Humanity homes, tutor or mentor in hundreds of schools, yet are rarely to be found doing direct organizing in neighborhoods. (p. 98)

These authors suggest that CSL models that incorporate diverse students' cultural assets, highlight diverse community features and attend to specific community and student

needs through organizing versus tutoring or help-oriented approaches may lead to increased student of color participation in CSL. The results of these studies imply that to engage ethnically and racially diverse students in service-learning courses requires looking at community service-learning in a different light.

Astin, Vogelgesang, Ikeda, and Ye (2000) found that "the single most important factor associated with a positive service-learning experience appears to be the student's degree of interest in the subject matter" (p. 1). In addition, the authors concluded that interest in the subject matter related to the service experience was especially important in enhancing comprehension of academic course material. Given the growing diverse student populations on campuses today, it seems important then that institutions of higher learning pay greater attention to developing innovative service-learning models that include and reflect the areas of interest of its diverse members.

Individual faculty and specific university programs make important efforts to offer diverse students appropriate academic curriculum and support. Still most courses and programs at universities (including service-learning experiences) fail to include perspectives and opportunities that recognize, respect and reflect the particular racial, cultural, ethnic, class, gender and linguistic identities of their students (Wong, 2002; Bartolome & Trueba, 2000; Gutman, 1994; Bartolome, 1994; Darder, 1992; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990). Scholars are beginning to question the power dynamics inherent in many established service-learning models. How to integrate the cultural know-how and expertise of racially and ethnically diverse university students and local communities into the service-learning curriculum and general educational experiences on our campuses remains an area open for study.

The 1980s and 1990s were a time of mass migration from countries that had previously not had a significant history of settlement in the U.S. According to U.S Census data, over 85% of these newcomers are considered racially and ethnically diverse refugees and immigrants from Latin America, Asia and Africa. Many of the resettled immigrant and refugee children from the '80s and '90s are now attending U.S. universities. In general, universities have experienced an overall increase in native and foreign-born students of color on their campuses (Trent, Owens-Nicholson, Eatman, Burke, Daugherty, & Norman, 2003; Wong, 2002). Universities, however, have struggled to offer meaningful service opportunities and experiences to the growing number of diverse students on their campuses. Zuniga, Hernandez-Leon, Shadduck and Villareal (2000) point out that "projects that bind universities and communities have encountered all sorts of obstacles, one of which is a Euro-centric educational perspective that ignores the culture and experiences of non-European immigrant communities" (p.109). Giroux (1991) adds,

> In the panoply of knowledge, intellectual knowledge as interpreted by the academy is privileged over other types: practical knowledge, "useless" knowledge, gossip, folk wisdom, and so on. Moreover, popular knowledge doesn't count as intellectual knowledge because it is ungrounded in an explicit philosophy and methodology that can be evaluated from a foundational perspective. At issue is the question of diversity in ways of producing knowledge and more broadly the validity of the distinction between legitimate intellectual knowledge and other kinds of knowledge. (p. 17)

To overcome these obstacles, scholars in the field of community service-learning are beginning to question the continued power dynamics and lack of integrated cultural know-how and expertise of diverse communities and student groups into the service-learning opportunities on their campuses.

Theoretical Links to a New Service-learning Pedagogy for Diverse Student Populations

In this chapter I reflect on the implications that the three theoretical frames I describe in Chapter 3 have on community service-learning. My reflections are based my participation in CIRCLE where ethnically and racially diverse university students engaged with similar and familiar ethnic communities. Specifically, I reflect on a series of community service-learning courses that focused on community development education, the application of students' cultural expertise (funds of knowledge) expressed through narratives and the building of peer and community relationships across similar immigrant and refugee ethnic communities.

The sub-questions that I have asked to understand the implications of these theories on CSL include: How does a CSL model that applies experiential pedagogy in the context of community development impact the educational experiences of refugee and immigrant undergraduate students and refugee youth? What meaning do students make of their participation in a service-learning course that engages them as peers, mentors and organizers with youth who share and relate to many of the same or similar lived experiences? How do students, working as peers in a CSL course reflect critically upon their experiences and acquire knowledge in this context? And what are some of the particular characteristics and benefits of a CSL curriculum that incorporates and cultivates the identities and experiences of refugee and immigrant students into academic content?

The following sections connect the three learning theories described in the previous chapter with CIRCLE's alternative community service-learning approach. With its focus on bringing together immigrant and refugee undergraduate students with

local refugee youth through critical and experiential pedagogy, peer-learning, and culturally relevant curriculum, the CIRCLE partnership applied a community service-learning model that questioned traditional, static, one-way learning classrooms. This community service-learning approach was distinct as it incorporated students' and youths' unique yet familiar and similar identities and experiences as the basis for building peer relationships across the university and neighboring refugee communities. It was through this alternative community service-learning pedagogy that CIRCLE proposed to link classroom concepts related to community development with real-life experiences and in so doing enhance student learning and meet defined community needs. CIRCLE viewed the development of opportunities that centralized the experiences of refugee and immigrant university students and communities as a way to meet the goal of this partnership, to link newcomer communities and higher education institutions. The three theories I have elaborated on have helped me conceptualize an emerging CSL model for working with diverse communities, in this case refugee and immigrant university undergraduate students and local refugee communities.

Critical and Experiential Learning Theory and Pedagogy

According to Giles and Eyler (1994), Dewey's main critique of the educational system was that it had not led to a more humane and moral society. Dewey deeply believed that learning institutions needed to serve society as the cultivators of democratic communities and he believed institutions would never meet this goal if they continued to passively impart knowledge. Instead, Dewey thought that "to democratize schools was to have students experience the mutuality of social life through service" (p.

82). Students who were not engaged in service would not be able to be engaged as critical citizens working toward democracy. Dewey supported the development of projects where students could learn directly from experience. Through projects embedded in students' communities, Dewey was convinced that community realities could become part of the classroom and problem-posing and problem-solving methodology could be put into practice. It is Dewey's democratic ideal to link education to service and community action that has made him one of most cited philosophers in the community service-learning literature.

Community service-learning pedagogy embodies many aspects of critical and experiential learning theory in practice. CSL has drawn greatly from the works of critical scholars to guide research agendas, develop theory and to justify the movement as a legitimate pedagogical approach (Jaboby, 1996; Giles & Eyler, 1994). The CSL model we applied in CIRCLE is based on many of these same principles. In particular we believed in linking diverse students with diverse communities through community projects as a way to bridge theory and practice through the synergy of community and university actors and their actions (Bryd, Maloy, & Sheen, 1996).

Freire's work has served as a "theoretical anchor for service-learning advocates" (Deans, 1999, p. 19) that challenges conventional assumptions about both the purpose and methods of education. This scholarship claims that dominant structures like the university are by definition oppressive. Nevertheless, Freire (1970) believed that social change takes place in these social structures when learning is truly connected to the histories and experiences of the learners. In addition, Freire firmly believed that curriculum, educational materials, research questions and solutions must spring from the

lives of the learners. According to experiential and critical educators the process of exploring students' experiences and realities must be guided by inquiry or problematization leading to reflection and action (praxis) and then to further inquiry.

The CIRCLE project questioned the university's relationship with its immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and its refugee community neighbors. It was through this critical questioning that the researchers and educators, dedicated to launching CIRCLE, began to imagine what it would be like if the history, culture and experiences of refugee and immigrants students were at the center of educational practice and connected directly to the refugee communities living only miles away from the university. They were especially excited about learning and supporting alternative knowledge systems and developing a series of courses that combined classroom learning with ethnically, racially, economically and culturally diverse students and communities. In this sense the community service-learning model that CIRCLE advocated focused on a commitment to the learners and the communities they were in partnership with. A great amount of importance and effort was placed on developing relationships with on-campus students of color and CIRCLE's refugee and immigrant community partners. In other words, this model strove to develop and nurture a partnership with diverse student groups and organizations that had rarely been the focus of university attention. As such the courses offered through CIRCLE and the School of Education were viewed as extensions of this partnership and not as courses that sought to merely link students to a community experience.

Critical and experiential pedagogies advocate that learning does not take place in a vacuum; rather that it is linked to learner's communities, histories and their

relationships. We began the CIRCLE journey with these key notions in mind. To start, the director and many members of the team were immigrants or refugees and knew or had worked with the growing refugee and immigrant communities in Massachusetts. Second, the team had established relationships with many refugee and immigrant students and organizations on campus interested in actively working with newcomer communities. Third, we had been assigned a general education course through the School of Education to focus on community development and the immigrant experience. Fourth, the team was committed to applying popular, critical and experiential education methods that were the focus of our international and adult education graduate program and much of our international work experiences. Finally the team agreed that community action projects would be essential elements of the course and serve as the links to build refugee and immigrant student and community relationships.

Critical pedagogues claim that educational agendas are never neutral (Freire, 1970; Shor, 1996). Indeed, in CIRCLE our agenda was intentional and political. CIRCLE's goal was to cultivate a learning environment that highlighted new forms of knowledge creation and lifted up the multiple histories, identities and group issues of immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and their communities. Bartolome (1994) writes that "working with subordinated students calls for a perception shift- a shift from a narrow and mechanistic view of instruction to one that is broader in scope and takes into consideration the socio-historical and political dimension of education" (p. 176). Central to CIRCLE's mission was the recognition of immigrant and refugee students as cultural insiders and bicultural mediators with unique histories, experiences and abilities that guide them as leaders. The course and its community service-learning component

focused on enhancing students' skills in these areas by reading counter-histories, discussing their themes and problems, and by exploring solutions to these problems through alternative forms of classroom and community dialogue such as community mapping, photonovelas, role-playing and other multiple dynamics. We also believed that it was critical to practice what we learned and discussed through action in a community setting.

In this case, the students' service project sprang from their knowledge of refugee/immigrants youth interests and realities as well as their ability to develop and receive a university grant dedicated to community, diversity and social justice issues. The grant, written by students as part of their course work, proposed to work with refugee youth in developing a photographic portrayal of young refugee community reality. This initiative culminated with a presentation and formal exhibit of student and immigrant community photography at the university.

Initiating a student-initiated project like the Visual Portrayal presents challenges (limited funding, lack of university transportation, semester interruptions, etc.), however, the project mainly proved to be a project of possibility. By this I mean it offered students an alternative community service-learning opportunity that believed in and encouraged diverse student and community potential. Rather than having students fit into a pre-established project or internship position, CIRCLE promoted student and community-driven projects. Fomenting zones of possibility for marginalized students is highlighted in the work of scholars like McLaren (1997) and Giroux (1997). The refugee and immigrant students engaged in the Visual Portrayal and "Here I Am Now!" projects were encouraged to apply what they learned in the classroom to developing

their own community project with the refugee youth they worked with. This CSL model sought to integrate classroom learning with student and community interest as a way to support new forms of university and community knowledge creation.

Critical and experiential pedagogy also places much attention on reflection. Students working in CIRCLE were encouraged to use multiple narrative forms (photography, journals, papers, poetry, life histories, and video) to reflect on their experiences and thus cultivate their voices and carve out their own authorship as part of their academic experience. In practical terms, the students' connection to similar and familiar communities opened opportunities for students to express a different type of academic language that focused on their lives and community work. These narratives are the principle sources of data that I use to better understand many of the abstract notions of critical pedagogy literature. In the findings chapter (Chapter 6) I describe in detail how ten refugee and immigrant student participants interpreted their experiences in CIRCLE.

Like other relatively new educational models, service-learning has been critiqued for its "trendiness," lack of conceptual frameworks, and logistical constraints on faculty and students. Stakeholders outside the university have questioned CSL models because their experiences with universities have often been inequitable relationships. Universities tend to dominate partnership agendas and seek out community partners to benefit student versus organization or community development (Cruz & Giles, 2000). Communities in this scenario end up as partners with less power and voice. Because most CSL models work on a university semester calendar, communities often feel that students and faculty come swooping down on them in number, dominate their

community agendas and make community members feel overwhelmed and pressured to find informants or participants to engage in their projects. A few organizations and community members honestly talked with CIRCLE staff about the sense of abandonment they had felt after a few intense months of work with other university groups that abruptly ended when students finished their semester. An incredible challenge for CSL models is working within timeframes that coincide with student and community realities. In CIRCLE we took this critique seriously and many students worked on community projects over the course of various semesters and summers.

The CIRCLE project committed its year of inception to engaging in community assessment processes. In addition, the director's personal relationships and prior community history with key refugee community leaders in Springfield, Amherst and Holyoke facilitated a greater sense of trust among community members to embrace the CSL courses and student/community projects we were proposing. In fact community members were often invited to participate or talk about their work in our CSL classrooms (ethnic organization leaders, local religious leaders i.e. Buddhist monks and available youth). The communities understood that many of the students working with the community youth were themselves immigrants and refugees and that in the classroom students would be focusing their discussions and assignments on newcomer communities and community development education. Community members came to understand that many of CIRCLE students were eager to begin a project as an extension of their own personal identity and a commitment to youth they could relate to. By taking the time to question and assess the communities and their organizations, the overall

response of the participants and leaders in the Vietnamese and Cambodian communities to partner with CIRCLE were positive.

This is not to say that there were no conflicts. To be sure there were continuous struggles of trying to balance the university and community worlds as we worked within the structures of a highly bureaucratic institution and the more fluid and flexible nature of newcomer communities. Nevertheless we were very committed to building relationships of reciprocity where communities and students both benefited in the community service-learning process. Reardon, Welsh, Kreiswirth and Forester (1993) caution universities and suggest participatory action approaches that include community members in the search for community solutions:

> when university research into the causes of social problems does not also address potential solutions it is viewed by the community as meeting campus research goals without responding to community needs. The professional-expert research model, which restricts community input, still dominates most campus-community partnerships. In addition low-income communities are painfully aware of the role local universities and colleges play in promoting uneven patterns of development through their policies regarding labor investment, property management etc. In seeking to overcome these obstacles to resident involvement in local service learning projects, university scholars are increasingly adopting participatory action research methods. The emerging problem-solving capacities of community participants by actively involving residents, leaders in every phase of research with university professionals. (p. 65)

Promoting a shift in the hierarchy of knowledge construction is at the core of experiential and critical learning theory. When handled respectfully with community members positioned as equal partners, community service-learning pedagogy can offer a model and vehicle for bringing theory into university classrooms and community practice.

The connections between critical and experiential pedagogy and service-learning are many. One of the most important connections I see is the need to build reciprocity and equitable decision-making power into the university and community service relationship while espousing a teaching philosophy of problem posing, action, and reflection that challenges Euro-centric models and reflects the diversity on our campuses. Applying community service-learning models that move students to new levels of learning by purposefully utilizing the assets of their differences and diversity is a way to steer away from banking forms of education. As educators experiment with new service-learning models we challenge old forms that have tended to replicate dominant group perspectives and mainstream establishments. Critical theory and pedagogy help us move in a direction that breaks away from a traditional CSL model as it constantly reminds us that we must incorporate new knowledge forms into our classrooms and outreach activities. Indeed such a paradigm supports incorporating the knowledge, cultural and linguistic expertise and socio-cultural experiences of ethnically and racially diverse students into service-learning opportunities as they work with similar and familiar communities.

Since much of the literature on service-learning concentrates on "exposing" students to different communities and cultural realities, we were interested in exploring another model, one that exposes students to ethically, racially, culturally and economically similar communities. Guided by the tenets of experiential and critical learning theory that stress that learning springs from our understanding of our place in the world, we wanted to explore a community service-learning project that is rooted in and reflects the experiences and viewpoints of racially and ethnically diverse immigrant

and refugee students in their worlds (Padilla, 1997; Nieto, 1996; Darder, 1992; Walsh, 1991; Heath 1983). Expanding on this, Giroux (1988) writes, "education has to be linked to forms of self and social empowerment if the [university] is to become a force in the ongoing struggle for democracy as a way of life" (p. 165). Freire (1970), moreover, emphasized the difficulty yet importance of connecting the contemporary issues of our daily lives with their historical causalities as knowledge of the past gives rise to the ability to imagine the future. The CIRCLE team was committed to exploring a service-learning experience that actively integrated the personal experiences and histories of refugee and immigrant students in their academic work and community practice. By promoting the learner's backgrounds, languages and cultures in contexts in and beyond the classroom, we were hopeful that students could more vividly imagine their futures beyond the university.

In the classroom facilitators in this study dedicated an important amount of time having students read about and discuss different notions of culture and worldview. Sleeter (1996) defines worldview as "not just how someone interprets and feels about individuals, but also how one frames the contemporary and historic patterns of relationships among socio-cultural groups, how one situates humans within a larger cosmology and how one conceives of human nature itself" (p.139). As a way to discuss worldview further we pointed out "everyone interprets the world from their location in a stratified society and as such our understanding of the world is only partial, we are always interpreting and filtering the world through our own histories and ideological frameworks" (Sleeter, 1996, p. 138).

The CIRCLE educators were mindful of consistently viewing our students as cultural insiders possessing a unique understanding of the Diaspora experience. Classroom discussions proceeded by examining "culture as both a seen and unseen phenomenon strongly influenced by the power relations within the social milieu, where cultural beings must live, work, love and survive" (Darder, 1991, p. 141). As facilitators we engaged students in groups to reflect on their culture and the values that inform their personal views of the world. Sleeter (1996) concurs with many of our classroom discussions and service-learning reflections that revolved around understanding worldviews and their differences. Sleeter writes,

> Students own social reality and their interpretation of that reality are valid within limits. But the entire social order is structured around boundaries that define different sets of rules for different categories of people. People are categorized socially on ascribed differences (that for the most part are visible, such as sex or skin color), with images of effort, ability and desire projected repeatedly through media in such a way that the dominant society explains inequalities with reference to characteristics of people rather than rules of institutions. Thus, the realities we experience and the viewpoints we construct within those realities are quite different. (p. 128)

On one level we agreed with the work of Kolb (1984) to begin the course with the assumption that students come into the classroom as individuals (linked to communities) with different learning styles, skills, histories, philosophies, attitudes, educational experiences, influences from home, and community despite the fact that the majority shared a common identity as immigrants and refugees. Our semesters began with the exploration of personal, ethnic, and cultural self and community. By exploring, affirming, and questioning immigrant and refugee students' identities and histories through our classroom readings, discussions, and reflections we intended to build on Kolb's notions of the complex learner and thus establish a sense of trust and

understanding within the classroom. We collected a variety of materials from immigrant and refugee educators, scholars, community activists, journalist, poets, songwriters, etc. Students were encouraged to bring in articles related to their community, share their own writing, exchange stories that spoke to them, and suggest films or other materials that resonated with their community, university, or political experiences. Here one student expands on a class activity focused on story telling:

> In class I learned about my culture through class exercises that talked about our cultural heritage. In the exercise I told my group where I came from and told them a story about my grandfather. It is like a folk tale because it is passed down from my parents to me. Even though my grandparents passed away a long time ago they still are a part of my life. Everyone took turns telling stories that meant the most to him or her. After the activity we had a group discussion and feedback from my peers. I found myself appreciating my culture more and for the first time feeling comfortable about it in class. (student journal)

The implication here is that critical curriculum cannot be created without collaboratively involving the communities we work with (Sleeter, 1996). Moreover, in CIRCLE we believed that when academic content reflects students' ethnic, racial, social, political, cultural, and economic identities, students can begin to form collective or connected identities in the classroom. In addition, when the community setting of the service-learning experience is rooted in students' own ethnic and cultural realities these emerging connected identities may further develop in their common service-learning and community organizing experiences.

Education from a significant perception shift means taking risks (Welch, 1996; Padilla, 1997). All sorts of exciting, challenging, confusing and tense situations arise when students and teachers explore new forms of learning where teachers relinquish control and are open to question the dominant ideology of traditional educational

discourse. In CIRCLE we were also committed to taking risks as an experiment into democratizing the university experience for refugee and immigrants students (Darder, 1991). Putting an alternative learning process in motion requires redefining the boundaries of who holds power, knowledge, expertise, and the tools for inquiry. The act of redefining dominant practices requires teachers, students, and community members to become co-participants and co-inquirers in the educational process. In this situation relational and social power traditions are challenged.

The service-learning pedagogy we supported in this project leans toward a transformational model, an approach that integrates key aspects of critical learning into undergraduate curriculum through practice in the community (Regmi, 2004). Through the combination of academic and service-learning, scholars believe that institutional and community change can happen (Eyler & Giles, 1999). According to Yeslma (1994) student learning is maximized in the service-learning experience through a holistic or synergistic model taking both classroom knowledge and community experiences as equally important and as a resource for the other. In Yeslma's model students engage in integrating both modes of learning, a process that requires sophisticated learning skills. Learning through academic and community experiences coupled with offering immigrant and refugee students the opportunity to work with ethnically and racially similar communities were the foundation of CIRCLE's model as well.

An additional aspect CIRCLE strongly supported was the concept of students as producers and inquirers of knowledge. In their service-learning experiences and in the classroom we emphasized the concept of groups of learners for collective inquiry. Most service-learning experiences are focused on the individual student engaging in a solo

service experience. Our vision of service was quite different. Given that in many cultures in and outside the U.S. community work is a collective experience, we wanted to model the notion of collective service where groups of students work together with groups of community members. In critical and experiential learning theory, the group or the collective is frequently considered an asset in developing a political community voice.

The students in our classes formed teams within the first week of the course and met regularly to discuss issues regarding logistics, time restraints, class schedules, work commitments, interests, and previous community experience and expertise. Once the service teams were coordinated, with the guidance of faculty and graduate students, they were introduced to a specific community group, agency, or leader. The service experience was not envisioned as a tutoring or individual one on one experience. On the contrary, each team was to work as a group in their community setting to develop a collective project with the youth. As a team, undergraduate students were required to research, plan, develop, and start up a feasible project over the semester. In some instances students continued their projects into following semesters and other students carried on their community work through independent study.

To be sure, the model we experimented with was not neat, clear and simple. Neither is critical pedagogy or the refugee and immigrant experience for that matter. These experiences are confusing and chaotic, hopeful and boundless. Recently resettled people often just try to make sense of their new surroundings. In many instances refugee and immigrant communities are untrusting of formal institutions and strangers wanting to help. As university players we firmly believed that shifting the traditional way service

is implemented was the most "empowering" way to work with refugee youth. Certainly local public schools and organizations serve as natural institutional spaces that support newcomer communities. However, we felt that it was important to facilitate immigrant and refugee university students at one of the state's flagship campuses in a service-learning engagement that resembled students' own cultural, ethnic, and racial experiences. This meant building relationships directly with refugee communities and their ethnic organizations to explore where community youth socialize, congregate, and learn. This meant changing how business as usual is conducted in the service-learning world. Indeed this perspective pushes the traditional and administrative envelope of how CSL is organized.

To create an environment open to questions and critique that will lead students to action, we first needed to build trust and understanding within the group. As part of the course content we included strategies to build trust based on experiential and popular educational materials and techniques. These included different exercises where students got to know each other (icebreakers and tone-setters), exchange information about themselves, explore their social identity (personal and structural awareness), learn about team work and decision making (group dynamics and development), how to set and question agendas, set ground rules, facilitate a class activity using techniques like role play or *fotonovela* (facilitator skill development) or develop a relevant mini-lecture and lead an inclusive class discussion. Community development education in immigrant and refugee communities was the subject and content of the courses we taught within the School of Education. Through a process of collective learning, we hoped to arrive at

common understandings of the assets, problems and solutions in refugee and immigrant communities.

Profound things can happen when learners feel like their stories are at the core of what is being taught. One student wrote,

> writing journals every week gives me the opportunity to think about certain issues discussed during class and apply them to my life and the community service-learning experience. Collecting my thoughts in my journal gives me a chance to share my experiences and expand on what I've been learning in class.

Another student thoughtfully summarizes that writing and reflecting about the self is a way to produce knowledge. He writes,

> everybody has a story to tell someone about his or her life and people learn about themselves from life. People's experiences come from their stories. Knowledge comes from their experiences. I've learned about myself from my experience and this is knowledge.

As graduate student facilitators and faculty we entered all classroom discussions as participants, using our own personal examples and stories. We made it a practice to engage in all small group work not merely as observers or facilitators but also as participants in the discussion. We also believed in critically guiding student discussion to avoid for example stereotyping or over simplifications of structural social issues. Hodagneu-Sotelo & Raskoff (1994) recommend that instructors be prepared to counter misconceptions by posing probing questions, providing critical feedback on student papers, and challenging students' misinterpretations when they occur. In sum, the aim in our teaching methodology was to model critical pedagogy where teachers are active learners, listeners, participants and facilitators rather than authoritative controllers.

From our own experience as educators we knew that no one model or universal application or implementation of critical pedagogy exists. This is precisely the point of

critical pedagogy and service-learning theory. Curriculum from this perspective should evolve from the experiences and knowledge of the learners we work with. Critical pedagogy espouses an array of principles, philosophies, theories and ideologies but not any one set of guidelines or pre-packaged curriculum. Hoping and striving for new and different realities is not frivolous, rather we firmly believed that it would lead to change. A change for refugee and immigrant university students and the institution's refugee neighbors through the application of a educational model that Deans (1999) calls "service-learning projects that pair critical consciousness aims with social action, [as a] fitting manifestation of Freire's theory in practice" (p.22).

CIRCLE faculty and graduate students spent time developing syllabi and finding appropriate reading and class materials. Concurrently we spent large chunks of our time meeting with the community, trying to promote the course on campus and paving the road for the service-leaning experience. As educators committed to teaching in learner-centered ways we needed to prepare the terrain so the service- learning experience could be successful. Fox (1994) explains in detail her commitment to visiting and spending time with the different African American community projects her students engage with. Her presence at the centers before the students began their service component allowed the center to get acquainted with the student service concept and it allowed the faculty person to make sure the sites suited the profiles of her undergraduate students. These visits also reinforced for this author the issues she needed to cover in the classroom i.e. "the persistence of racism and how it affects all our interactions as a civil society" and how "difficult it is to understand the logic behind different ways of thinking and communicating and the dynamics of power (Fox, 1994, p. 58). As students proceeded

with their service-learning component in similar ethnic communities they were able to apply knowledge accumulated as individuals and as members of groups. Our intention was that this would not only develop their sense of individual and group identity but also influence and make a lasting impression on their overall university experience.

Situated Learning and its Connection to Service-learning

Highly individualized and competitive instructional systems continue to dominate our institutions and learning systems. For students who come from diverse, racial, ethnic, and cultural experiences where social interaction is a developed skill and an expectation, performing academic tasks in an isolated and individualized manner may not be the most academically appropriate or beneficial means of learning (Heath, 1989; Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992). Building peer-learning groups, in contrast, may be more effective for these communities. Supporting peer relationships in CSL implies stepping away from the overwhelming focus on individual achievement and merit that most universities promote. This means promoting the concept that learning happens through relational and mediated experiences (Wertsch, 1990; Lave & Wenge, 1992). Unfortunately diverse and culturally relevant teaching methods that encourage peers to build working relationships in the classroom and in their service experience are still a rarity in most undergraduate education and community service-learning programs.

Eyler and Giles (1999) found that participation in service-learning positively affects interpersonal engagement with peers and others at the university. Their study reported that service-learning created opportunities for students to interact with their peers and develop friendships that increased students' ability to interact with others in

positive ways. Building a cohort of peers amongst refugee and immigrant students through classroom and service-learning experiences was an important aspect of our work in the CIRCLE project. We viewed this as important for various reasons. First, for many students working with peers is an academically and culturally meaningful process. Second, by working as a group, students learn first hand about group dynamics and group development, all critical skills in community organizing and community development settings. Third, as a group engaged in service-learning experiences, peers build upon one another's strengths and learn valuable lessons from one another. Finally, building a cohort of ethnically and racially diverse students within a service-learning context supports tenets of critical pedagogy that espouse creating collective spaces of change where students at the margins can act and be heard. What follows are examples of how situated learning theory supports service-learning as a way for diverse students to build and foster a community of learners striving for change.

In the CIRCLE project refugee and immigrant undergraduate students were encouraged to develop peer relationships based on their mutual lived experiences and a realization of shared social-cultural perspectives. In the classroom we tried to accomplish this through an exploration of students' histories and social realities (immigrant and refugee diaspora and resettlement, intergenerational issues, student of color concerns etc.), an analysis of their communities and cultures, a look into the works of minority scholars and activists and the practice of experiential and popular education techniques. CIRCLE classroom activities focused on group work and group dialogue. As popular and critical educators we used classroom experiences to create an atmosphere of trust and tolerance that allowed students to work collectively in groups

and build relationships in the context of the classroom and then in their community projects.

Situated learning theory values the importance of learning in a group situation through the guidance of mentors or peer models in a specific context (Bandura, 1984). Service-learning pedagogy seeks to promote student learning in a specific community context and then integrate this experience with reflection as part of the academic learning process. Integral to the service- learning model is the notion of building relationships of reciprocity and mutual learning across communities and campuses. Service-learning does not, however, specify that students work in teams or groups as part of their community work although some scholars and educators promote peer-learning. Situated learning theory compliments service-learning pedagogy in that it advocates a relational and context specific perspective linked to learning (Addes & Keene, 2004; Chesler, Kellman-Fritz, & Knife-Gould, 2003).

Wolfson and Willinsky (1998) identify four qualities of situated learning that coincide with service-learning pedagogy. I have included examples from CIRCLE after each of the qualities.

1. situated contexts (i.e.: undergraduate students worked with refugee youth in specific Western Mass. youth communities to develop a photo exhibit depicting the youths' community)
2. authentic contexts (refugee and immigrant undergraduate students teach photography skills to the refugee youth who in turn use these skills to develop a visual story of their community to share with community members and outsiders)

3. collaborative contexts (undergraduate students work as a team to develop peer relationships amongst themselves and the youth as they develop a photo project. Students and youth divide the responsibilities of the project, learn from one another and seek guidance from community leaders and university staff)
4. reflective contexts (students and youth engage in individual and group meetings and meet with community leaders and university staff. They review their project goals, pose critical questions as to the process of the work, link these questions and insights to academic readings and materials and prepare written reflections on their learning)

Wolfson and Willinsky (1998) developed this schematic as a way for educators to identify the different contexts of learning that unfold when situated learning theory dovetails with service-learning approaches. Indeed situated learning theory provides a frame to focus attention on "the nature of learning that can be expected to follow educationally successful forms of community participation" (Wolfson & Willinsky, 1998, p. 29). According to these authors, investigating this kind of "learning can only serve to strengthen the educational position of service-learning" (p. 29).

Building peer relations amongst refugee and immigrant university students through academic and service-learning components has the potential to lead diverse students toward academic success and ultimately educational reform. The CIRCLE project I believe offers such an example. This project provided 6 years of university and community learning linked to newcomer communities. As an educational model, it provided many cohorts of racially and ethnically diverse immigrant and refugee

undergraduate students with opportunities to work as learning partners in culturally familiar communities. The project enhanced students' community development skills while engaging them in alternative pedagogical and social relations. Students were encouraged to look collectively at community and university issues through their racial, ethnic, immigrant/refugee status, socio-economic and cultural lenses. Students built strong social relationships and learned many skills as a result of their collective work over semesters. A few examples include, students learned about group dynamics, how groups develop, how community develop projects evolve and the complexity of getting them off the ground, they learned the importance of communication and organization, they came to understand the power of collective work and they witnessed the political and social strength a group can wield (community speak out, student run conference, news letter etc.). Directly related to situated learning theory, students learned about the positive influences they can have on younger peers as they developed their skills in community organizing, training and outreach while working with the refugee community youth.

Through a collective acknowledgement of students' expertise and know-how, undergraduates were encouraged to develop projects that challenged different aspects of the status quo at the university and community level. These included a community speak out against welfare reform, creating Asian-American student forums, developing a student photography exhibit that depicted the lives of contemporary refugee/immigrant youth and the formation of a girls group in a very insular and patriarchal resettled Southeast Asian community.

As the refugee and immigrant undergraduates and youth in the project formed stronger peer relationships, they were also able to more clearly articulate their projects' purpose and carry out community organizing activities with political intent. Miron and Lauria (1998) believe that collective forms of student resistance emerge when students are "organized around racial solidarity and linked to categories of social identity, especially racial/ethnic identities" (p. 190). These authors view such forms of active resistance as "embedded in human agency and in particular with the struggles for civil and other kinds of human rights (p. 190). The refugee and immigrant participants and project staff agreed that organizing a community speak out or developing a university-wide photography exhibit were indeed examples of student and youth action and resistance to situations in their communities and at the university. They also saw them as alternatives to mainstream and charity focused service-learning projects.

Here I have tried to demonstrate some of the connections between situated learning theory and community service-learning. Beyond the typical creation of diversity committees or developing a course on diversity, this form of service-learning pedagogy offers the university an educational model that brings the diversity of local communities into the university classroom and builds on the diverse expertise of its multi-ethnic students. Non-traditional educational events unfold in the critical classroom when we create the circumstances for like peers of color to interact in reciprocal community learning relationships. Examples include; students and community members facilitating learning activities, organizing community service-learning projects, or engaging as mentors with community peers. These activities shift the traditional community and university learning dynamic. When peer teams are

engaged in active like-community experiences and then encouraged to reflect on these experiences, a different type of learning takes place. This learning has its foundation in the expertise and know-how of non-traditional knowledge "generators" who are capable of acting on personal community and social justice issues.

Chesler, Kellman-Fritz and Knife-Gould (2003) found that training peer facilitators for CSL not only was a more democratic way to impart CSL pedagogy but it was also an effective use of scare university resources. In addition, these authors argue that peers have special resources such as "their closeness in age to other students, the ease of mutual identification that flows thereby and the image of self and initiative and commitment that comes from students seeing their peers in positions of instructional leadership (p. 59). Although such models "run against the tide of traditional university instruction" (Chesler et al. 2003, p. 61) and are full of other complexities (time issues, peer and peer mentor tensions, community vs. university knowledge and education etc.), change is bound to occur if not at the institutional level at least at the level of enriching students' educational experiences.

In this section I have tried to present specific aspects of situated learning theory that complement service-learning pedagogy and support more collective forms of learning in the CSL experience.

Funds of Knowledge and the Community Service-learning

Undergraduate students and youth in the CIRCLE project drew on their funds of knowledge to communicate with one another, to develop a sense of mutual trust and to organize community projects. For example, refugee and immigrants students working

with the Cambodian youth tapped into their funds of knowledge to re-learn and re-tell traditional games from their countries of origin. Through playing and documenting traditional Cambodian games (one group developed a "how-to" booklet), students and youth developed a cultural communication platform to better get to know one another, learn about one another's communities, relate to common cultural experiences (games and play), and work together on their community project (photography). In the Vietnamese community youth case, undergraduates (first-generation Asian immigrants and refugees) drew upon their funds of knowledge related to cooking as a social and cultural activity that enhances peer relations and collective interactions. Students and youth organized their weekly meetings around cooking sessions where they shared in the social and familial act of buying food and preparing a meal. This activity served as a type of "icebreaker" to move students and youth into discussing different family and community issues and working on their common community project for the CSL class.

Students from immigrant and refugee backgrounds found that their funds of knowledge of playing traditional games or cooking connected them in particular ways to the Cambodian or Vietnamese youth they worked with. Students related to the home and community settings of the youths in a manner that would be virtually impossible for mainstream students. For example, in one meeting undergraduates used the act of cooking to talk with youth about their own experiences of living in extended family situations where cousins, uncles, aunts, and grandparents live under one roof and where daily cooking routines take place across household generations. Students discussed how comfortable and familiar they were squatting on the floor with the youth using large knives to chop vegetables on low wooden cutting boards to seeing dried fish and chilies

hanging from the kitchen windows and sitting on the floor on mats to relish the food they had prepared. The ability of Asian, African and Latino undergraduate students to take a common cultural experience such as cooking or playing a game and connect this to a collective community project such as documenting the youths' communities through photographs offers new insights for community service-learning.

Funds of knowledge, as in the above examples, reflect the strategic and cultural resources diverse students can draw upon to communicate and develop relationships with one another and like community members. Whether it is through games, cooking or just knowing how to talk about common historical events (i.e.: Southeast Asian refugee experience), students from similar and familiar backgrounds are able to utilize their specific ethno-cultural, social, political and economic resources and understanding of the world to connect with the refugee youth they work with. Service-learning opportunities that encourage students to discover and develop the cultural and behavioral practices that lie at the core of their cultural identity can facilitate not only students' insertion into the community service-learning setting but also the validation of students' funds of knowledge as meaningful to the community service experience. This validation, in turn, sets distinct academic expectations and potentialities about the knowledge and experience that diverse students "have but are seldom given the opportunity to share and express" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 330).

The implications for CSL pedagogy are important. Greater attention needs to be paid to CSL instruction that incorporates the cultural, social, class, ethnic, racial and immigration-status issues of diverse student populations. The assumption being that diverse students will excel academically when educators highlight diverse learning

experiences, encourage authentic inter-group dialogue, and support meaningful community exchanges (Torres-Guzman et al., 1994). In addition, CSL teachers who work with diverse students should be supported to learn how to "incorporate the funds of knowledge of their students into the learning modules that approximate the reality of their [student] population" (Velez-Ibanez & Greenberg, 1992, p. 330).

The written and visual reflections that undergraduate students produced as part of their course requirements conveyed how students' common funds of knowledge facilitated their community service-learning work. Students clearly express how tapping into their funds of knowledge to cook, to play traditional games or to share stories about their migration and flight to second countries and then to the U.S. greatly helped them to connect and bond with the refugee youth. Many students discussed how their community knowledge and history is rarely legitimated or highlighted in standard U.S. texts or classrooms. Students also articulated in their writing and interviews how having a common cultural and historical connection with the refugee youth helped them enormously in the development of their final community service-learning projects. The "Here I am Now!" photography exhibit was a collective expression of students' and youths' work together.

In this study I extend the funds of knowledge construct to the service-learning context as a way to more deeply think about curriculum development when working with diverse students and communities. In CIRCLE we believed in legitimizing students' funds of knowledge through the academic and community service-learning experience. Both classroom activities and community service experiences encouraged

students to delve into their own particular forms of expertise and knowledge. The funds of knowledge concept affirms that the

> elements of the daily lifestyle of families in the community as legitimate sources of knowledge, a kind of cultural capital that can be tapped by students and understood by teachers to improve the educational processes of the schools. (Olmedo, 1997, p 550)

In the courses we incorporated narratives as an exciting and concrete way for students to convey how they utilized their funds of knowledge in their classroom and community work. Critical and service-learning pedagogies call for developing educational activities that elicit learner reflection. As critical educators it seemed appropriate to encourage students to shape their reflections around their funds of knowledge or the strategic and cultural resources that they and their communities possess. At the same, we were interested in teaching students that writing and sharing stories that reflected their funds of knowledge were important process in becoming community developers.

Journals, reflection papers, oral discussions and visual narratives provided the space for active, regular, systematic thinking about what students were learning. For students to gain a deeper understanding of the value of their individual and community funds of knowledge, we encouraged writing and the sharing of stories to link their community realities and their academic service-learning experience. According to Storr and Lesage (2002), sharing stories and socio-cultural realities builds community and has political potential. Shumer (2000) argues that the narratives of service-learning experiences offer the depth and detail needed in understanding and eventually implementing new research findings. On a social and cultural level, sharing alternative stories that speak about community expertise has the potential to bolster student esteem

and build student community. In CIRCLE, classroom and small group discussions and story-sharing established a kind of social and political foundation for students to work in their community settings. Classroom discussions were often generated sharing a student's story or a journal entry. Storr and Lesage (2002) note that the political potential in students' "disruptive" stories arises as listeners respond to stories rarely heard in traditional classrooms. These interactions create new classroom dynamics, informed by a new perspective on learning (Storr & Lesage, 2002). In CIRCLE we believed that students' stories informed by individual and community funds of knowledge have the potential to shape the community service-learning experience.

As students interacted with their narratives (writing a reflection paper, talking about a photography, sharing a journal entry with a peer), they began to recognize the benefits in bringing their stories to wider audiences and connecting them to projects that can create change. At the same time, I believe their visual and written narratives contributed to their understanding of present university and community relations. On November, 24, 1997, undergraduate students and youth developed a photography exhibit, a visual narrative that tapped into the "funds of knowledge" of immigrant and refugee communities to portray contemporary realities. The act of sharing visual narratives and writing about the meanings embedded in their photography at a public exhibit was a way for students and youth to build broader communities to learn and interact with. Concurrently, students and youth were resisting tradition systems and structures that tend to want to define diverse students' educational and community spaces and issues.

The multiple forms of narrative we promoted in CIRCLE helped students and staff to explore socio-cultural experiences that promoted deeper peer and community relations. We also used narratives as a way to question dominant social structures, critique oppressive institutions and dream about social change. Storr and Lesage (2002) write that through narratives students and teachers can challenge traditional mainstream approaches to teaching,

> using narratives as a vehicle for teaching about oppression and social change challenges the positivistic approach widely found in universities. This pattern of investigation is particularly dominant in the social sciences where it posits both a methodology and an outcome, seen as "objective truth". In particular feminist postmodern and critical theorists have emphasized the value in learning from personal narratives. (p 96)

At the risk of being repetitive, I strongly believe that teachers who promote narratives that personalize and recognize students' experiences work towards questioning the traditional Euro-centric university structures. As I mentioned in Chapter 3, Conchran-Smith (1994) and Ng (2003) call this "teaching against the grain", an approach where the commitment to student narratives represents an intervention and an action that teachers and students embrace in their advocacy for educational reform and social change.

Tanaka (2003) asserts that, although critical elements, storytelling, and narratives "alone are not enough but must have an action component that reflects actual movement toward social change" (p. 192). Christensen (1991) echo this in their example of undergraduate students engaged in a course on AIDS/HIV that linked narrative reflection through an ongoing journal with a service project working with AIDS/HIV patients. In CIRCLE we strongly believed in a similar model. While developing peer relationships within a transformational service-learning model we also promoted

magnifying students' funds of knowledge in their class and community work. The concept of narrative provided a place for students to reflect on and document their expertise and cultural know-how within the context of an action oriented community project.

Richardson (2000) adds that narratives and stories have a transformational potential at the individual level of the author and "reader's" consciousness and at a social level that can both lead to action. Exploring narratives can lead to a better understanding of individual and community learning while tapping into student and community funds of knowledge. Ultimately I have been interested in exploring how a community service-learning model that supports tapping into students' funds of knowledge through narrative in the context of service-learning can support the educational experiences of diverse university students of color and the communities of color they work with.

In CIRCLE, immigrant and refugee undergraduate students worked with refugee youth in to teach them about photography while collectively learning community-organizing skills. This was the action component of the project. Students were engaged in peer relationships with the youth in their homes, schools and community organizations and in workshops about photography Students funds of knowledge allowed them to better connect with the youth to develop their photography project. Later students reflected on these experiences in their journals, reflections papers, and class discussions.

On the one hand, the cultural and strategic skills or funds of knowledge applied by students can be viewed as the wheels that allow them to put their CSL projects in

motion (i.e., organizing a cooking event to build community as a step toward their photograph project) On the other hand, I view the narratives students produced as conveying how students explored and applied their funds of knowledge in their community service-learning work.

Summary

As the number of ethnically and racially diverse students attending institutions of higher learning increases, universities are faced with greater educational opportunities and challenges. Individual faculty and specific university programs strive to offer diverse students appropriate academic support. Still many courses and programs (including service-learning experiences) fail to include educational perspectives and opportunities that recognize, respect and reflect the particular racial, cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identities of their students (Wong, 2002; Bartolome & Trueba, 2000; Gutman, 1994; Bartolome, 1994; Darder, 1992; Portes & Rumbaut, 1990). By exploring a community service-learning model through three distinct learning theories, my intention is to present an emerging pedagogy that seeks to address these gaps. A critical pedagogy approach that focuses on the experiences, resources and expertise (funds of knowledge) of immigrant and refugee undergraduate students working in peer groups with culturally, racially, and ethnically similar and familiar youth offers an alternative model for the CSL community to consider.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

Introduction

In this chapter I present an overview of the study's research design. I also describe the qualitative research methods I used for collecting and analyzing the data for this dissertation. I begin by restating the main questions that guided this research:

- In what ways do immigrant and refugee students understand and make meaning of their participation in a service-learning course that engages them with ethnically, racially and culturally similar and familiar refugee youth?
- How do students describe their experiences of learning and working collectively (in peer groups) as mentors and organizers in their community service learning outreach and classroom activities?
- How do refugee and immigrant undergraduate students reflect upon their academic and personal experiences after participating in a community service-learning program that incorporated experiential pedagogy, promoted peer-learning and legitimated students' identities, cultures and communities?

To answer these three research questions, I employed qualitative research approaches that allowed me to "study [this case] in its natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret this phenomena in terms of the meanings people brought to it" (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p.2). Qualitative research methods facilitated my understanding and interpretation of the research questions I asked. Moreover, qualitative methods with a critical perspective resonated with the educational philosophy of the CIRCLE project. In order to examine and comprehend how immigrant and refugee

undergraduate students understood, talked about, and made meaning of their experiences in a community service-learning setting with similar and familiar neighboring refugee youth, the CIRCLE team agreed on two fundamental and related notions: 1.) that all education is intrinsically political; and 2.) that education, like other social institutions, is based on relations of power. Furthermore, the purpose of the CIRCLE project was to provide an alternative and creative educational forum that challenged dominant practices in higher education that tend to exclude or minimize student of color experiences.

To briefly recapitulate, this dissertation analyzes the experiences of a group of ten refugee and immigrant undergraduate students who worked together over a two-year period (1996-1998) in CIRCLE (Center for Immigrant and Refugee Community Leadership and Empowerment) at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. The ten students were part of a participatory community photography project funded through a Chancellor's counsel grant students wrote and subsequently received. The project involved developing modules to train and expose youth to community photography. Vietnamese and Cambodian youth were given their own disposable cameras to document their community in the company of the undergraduate students who mentored them.

The majority of the undergraduate students came to the United States as children. A few arrived as teen-agers or young adults. All of the students refer to themselves as non-White, first-generation refugees or immigrants. Six students are Southeast Asian refugees or immigrants (Vietnam, Cambodia, Philippines, and Laos), one student emigrated from Brazil (of Korean descent), one student is an African (Ethiopia) immigrant, and two students are East Asia immigrants from China and Taiwan. The

students who participated in this study took various community service-learning courses through CIRCLE and did their community outreach with Cambodian or Vietnamese refugee youth from neighboring communities. Some students became facilitators in the undergraduate course or in weekend training sessions. The immigrant and refugee undergraduate students and refugee youth participants in this study are a reflection of the impact of immigration experienced by the state of Massachusetts and the nation as a whole over the past few decades.

Research Design

The design of this study is based on reviewing and analyzing secondary historical data related to the Visual Portrayal project and subsequent Here I am Now!" photography exhibit developed under CIRCLE. For this dissertation, I have returned to data that I helped collect during the 1996-1998 life of these CIRCLE projects. As one of the research staff, trainers and facilitators I was intimately engaged in the overall design of CIRCLE's education and research agendas. Because of my close involvement as a facilitator with the cohort of students who conceptualized and carried out the Visual Portrayal project and "Here I am Now!," I became very interested in the educational process. For this reason I decided to interview ten students engaged in the project after the inaugural photography exhibit (1998). Only recently have I transcribed these interviews to include them as data for this study. During the 1996-1998 phase of the project, I was very deliberate about filing and organizing the ten students' reflection papers, journal entries, poetry, and photographs that we used as research for CIRCLE and that I now use as data in this dissertation. As part of the university's and CIRCLE's

research and human subjects protocol, we informed all the students and youth guardians at the time of our research agenda and received their written consent to use student and youth interviews, journal entries, reflection papers, and photography for project research purposes and for my future dissertation. I have also incorporated CIRCLE project documents and other university documents to develop the contextual background section of this dissertation.

The five areas of data that I analyze include: 1.) project documents, 2.) participant observation notes, 3.) ten transcribed student interviews, 4.) student writing (journal entries and reflection papers), 5.) student and youth photography. Below I briefly describe each of these data components and then I develop them in more depth in the subsequent section of this chapter.

Project Documents

I reviewed many documents that have been part of the overall project design of CIRCLE and in particular the Visual Portrayal and "Here I am Now!" photography exhibit. These included mission statements, goals, objectives, grant proposals, curriculum design, community outreach strategies, and evaluation methods. I also reviewed other documents produced during the implementation of CIRCLE: evaluation reports, annual reports, teaching materials, research papers, and university publications related to community service-learning and minority student populations. These documents offered information about the historical and institutional context of the project, its overall community education and training strategy, and the program's conceptualization of collective leadership practices.

Participant Observation Notes

As part of CIRCLE's research agenda, the project staff was asked to reflect at regular intervals on the process and progress of the courses, community outreach, community building efforts, and research agendas. As one of the research associates and course instructors I helped organize and facilitate many of the class sessions, weekend workshops, and community meetings. At the same time I often accompanied students to the Springfield or Amherst meeting sites they organized with refugee youth. All of these settings gave me an opportunity to converse with students about their work, ask them what they learned in their meetings or in class, how they felt about a particular workshop and how they felt they might apply this learning in the future. On many occasions, especially during the Visual Portrayal/ "Here I am Now!" exhibit phase of CIRCLE, I took extensive field notes related to our conversations and to what I observed during the workshops, classes, or meetings. These field notes have provide important insights for the design, theoretical framework, and analysis of this study

In-Depth Interviews

As a participant and facilitator of the CIRCLE project, I had many conversations with students inside and outside the classroom regarding their work, their families, and the specific context and process of their community outreach. These multiple conversations served as a foundation of mutual trust that facilitated later student in-depth interviews. I conducted these interviews with ten of the undergraduate students who were most actively involved in conceptualizing, designing, developing, and carrying out the Visual Portray project and "Here I am Now!" exhibit. The interviews I conducted at

the end of the project (1998) were based on a series of guiding questions related to student's experiences inside and outside of this university experience. In most of the interviews I used student and youth photography to elicit a deeper discussion about the learning process of their photography project (Harper, 1987; 1998). I was interested in how students understood their experiences in the CIRCLE courses and the community service work they were engaged in but I also wanted to understand how this experience overlapped with building relationships with their peers, their individual development, and the development of their sense self and community. The questions that guided these interviews included: How has CIRCLE's approach to community service learning impacted you? What have you learned through these experiences? How did the community service learning class (Educ. 226 and 229) & community outreach activities affect you? What has your relationship with fellow undergraduates in CIRCLE been like? To what extent has this experience helped you reflect on your culture, your family, and yourself? Has your view of yourself and your identity changed since you began working with CIRCLE? How did the context of classroom and community outreach help you navigate your university experience?

Student Writing

Weekly Journals

Students were asked to write weekly journals and share them with the teachers and at times with their peers who then provided feedback. The journal writing was about their personal discovery and what they learned as a result of participating in a

community service-learning class as well as working with refugee youth in their community outreach projects. They were asked to focus on issues, situations, and incidents that arose every week in class or in the community. Students were given learning journal guidelines that encouraged writing from a critical analysis perspective. Feedback from the instructors helped students to improve their analytical skills. This journal sharing was a kind of dialogue between teacher and students where the teacher invited critical questions for deeper discussion and analysis. Although these journals were often based on class sessions or particular community meetings with the youth, they allowed the facilitators to get a general understanding of students' feelings about their learning and community experience.

Reflection Papers

As part of the course requirements, students were asked to write 1or 2 reflection papers each between 4-6 pages in length. These papers were to be critical reflections of their experiences in their community service-learning experience. In some of the classes facilitators decided to have students write an individual reflection paper and then produce a final group paper where each project team (i.e. the team that worked with Vietnamese youth and the photography exhibit) described and analyzed their group and community engagement processes. The aim of the reflection papers was to develop students' analysis of their class or community experience applying the concepts, issues, and theories we discussed in class.

Photography and Video Segments

As I mentioned in the contextual background chapter of this study, the students engaged in this photography project submitted a grant to the Chancellor's office describing their desire to use participatory photography as a way for neighboring refugee youth to portray their communities. Undergraduate students and youth learned together about photography, how to take pictures, what makes a photograph interesting, and then they worked on developing a concept for an exhibit at the university. They had taken many photographs of their communities but needed to collectively decide which photographs they wanted to display and describe at the inauguration. The majority of the youth chose photographs that described their families and communities in their everyday activities (at home, on the street, at school, at friends' homes etc.). Although strongly anchored in their Vietnamese and Cambodian identities, the youth wanted to portray their communities in their bicultural contexts or as they see their lives in the United States today. For this reason they decided on the exhibit title, "Here I am Now!" I use the exhibit photographs as visual data in this dissertation. I regard these photography and video segments shot of the exhibit and classroom activities as complementary texts and narratives to further expand and explain the experiences of the students and youth in this project.

Why Qualitative Methods?

In this dissertation, I revisit historical qualitative data that I helped collect over a two-year period of CIRCLE activities (1996-1998). The project team (myself included) primarily chose qualitative research methods for CIRCLE research initiatives as they

allowed the researchers to gain an understanding of a given situation or context in its natural setting. Qualitative research methods facilitate a researcher's explanation of study participants' interpretations and perspectives of a situation to reveal their different ways of thinking and knowing (Belenky, Clinchy, Golberger & Tarule, 1986). Patton (1990) writes:

> qualitative designs are naturalistic in that the researcher does not attempt to manipulate the research setting. The research setting is a naturally occurring event, program, community, relationship or interaction that has no predetermine course established by and for the researcher. Rather, the point of using qualitative methods is to understand naturally occurring phenomena in their naturally occurring states. (p. 41)

Qualitative methods also allow the researcher to collect data through a variety of formal and informal approaches (observation, interviews, participant writing). In addition, qualitative approaches to research have subjective experience at the center of the inquiry and therefore are based on a set of underlying assumptions and values. Patton (1990) states:

> qualitative methods permit [the researcher and participants] to study selected issues in depth and detail and approach fieldwork without being constrained by predetermined categories of analysis that contribute to the depth, openness and detail of the qualitative inquiry. (ibid., p. 13)

Over the life of the CIRCLE project, the research team generally selected qualitative methods to conduct their inquiries including: in-depth interviews, participatory action research, ethnography, and participatory evaluation, amongst others. For me, being actively engaged in the project as a facilitator, researcher, and participant provided a natural research opportunity to explore how students understood this multi-dimensional education process. As a subject in the research process, the data I collected was also subjective, a perspective qualitative methods support. Qualitative methods lend

themselves to analyzing settings like the one I describe in this study. As participants and participant observers, and researchers in CIRCLE used these approaches to listen to and understand the perceptions, meanings, and ideas of all the participants engaged in the educational project and inquiry. Denzin and Lincoln (2000) write:

> Qualitative research is a situated activity that locates the observer in the world. It consists of a set of interpretive, material practices that make the world visible. These practices transform the world. They turn the world into a series of representations, including field notes, interviews, conversations, photographs, recordings and memos of self. At this level qualitative research involves and interpretive, naturalistic approach to the world. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of or interpret phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them. (p. 3)

Overall Research Approaches

As a research team, members of the CIRCLE staff agreed that much of our research was ethnographic in nature. We decided to conduct our research from this methodological perspective because our research agendas coincided with a substantial number of features that Atkinson and Hammersly (2000) mention as key aspects of ethnography. These include:

- a strong emphasis on exploring the nature of particular social phenomena rather than setting to test hypotheses about them
- a tendency to work primarily with "unstructured" data that have not been coded at the point of data collection in terms of a closed set of analytic categories
- investigation of a small number of cases perhaps just one case, in detail
- an analysis of data that involves explicit interpretation of the meanings and functions of human actions, the product of which mainly takes the form of verbal descriptions and explanations with quantification and statistical analysis playing a subordinate role at most. (p. 248)

These features reflected the educational research positions that the team working in the CIRCLE embraced. As educators we were committed to understanding the social phenomena of students' and youths' interactions and cognitive processes while engaged in an alternative community service-learning experience. At the same time we committed ourselves to collecting unstructured data or data that evolved from the student-centered and participatory nature of the project. So when students decided to develop a project related to community photography, write about these experiences and apply these experiences in their classroom discussions and community meetings, these conversations and narratives became data for the project and subsequently for this study. Furthermore, this dissertation is based on the detailed experiences of participants in a single case study. The analysis I provide in the next chapter emerges from an interpretation of students' actions and interactions as peers, mentors, community organizers, and facilitators in this process. In other words, the findings and analysis in this study are based on my participant observation of student and youth action at the time and students' verbal (interviews), visual (photographs), and written (reflection papers and journal entries) descriptions and explanations of their experiences in this community service-learning endeavor over the 1996-1998 period.

Because of the political and critical nature of the CIRCLE project, we specifically relied on a critical ethnographic approach. Critical ethnography stresses the political tensions that exist in education and ultimately seeks to pursue equity, to struggle for liberation and to defend human rights through ethnographic research (Trueba & McLaren, 2000; Fine &Weiss, 1996; Carlspecken, 1996). Trueba and McLaren (2000) describe critical ethnography as "attempting to reveal how hegemonic

practices, systems of meaning and typification, and methods of interpretation have insinuated themselves into everyday life" (p. 55). In fact, these authors claim that critical ethnography can make a "significant contribution to our understanding of the ways in which power is inscribed in and through culture, leading to practices of domination and exploitation that have become naturalized in every day social life" (p. 54). On the one hand, critical ethnography provides a way for the researcher and, in participatory situations, the participants to understand how and why hegemonic formations are able to persist in a given social context even if these formations are contested. For example, CIRCLE students were encouraged to discuss their experiences as newcomers at a state university and question the lacuna of courses and academic programs focused on the immigration experience. As students comfort level increased, they articulated their desires to resist and contest university practice and structures that historically have wanted them to "blend" into the Euro-centric way of "doing" education. I believe that understanding these structures was a critical part of shaping students' decision to develop a visual portrayal of refugee and immigrant communities through photography and present it to the larger university community.

On the other hand, I have also found critical ethnography useful because it demands locating the researcher and the study participants (refugee and immigrant students and neighboring communities) within the wider practices of dominant social structures. For this reason I spent time in Chapter 2 reviewing the historical and contemporary relationships of students of color within the university. At the same time, situating the researcher within the research context encourages the participant observer and author to "more fully recognize the complexity of relations that constitute the

researcher's own socially determined positions with the reality he/she is trying to understand" (Trueba & McLaren, p. 58).

I applied critical ethnographic perspectives not only at the time of the data collection (1996-1998) but also during this present phase of analysis and writing for the dissertation. This ethnographic approach forced me to step back and reflect on my role as participant, participant observer, and researcher. How can a white middle-class woman enter an educational and research relationship with colleagues and students from very diverse refugee and immigrant experiences? Although I shared with my students a bi-cultural identity, I have lived in different countries (including the countries some of the students were from) and I speak various languages, these do not blur the fact that I entered this relationship from a position of privilege. Nevertheless, I am deeply committed to understanding the circumstances of our collective journey that allowed this diverse group of colleagues, refugee and immigrant undergraduate students, youth, and I to collaborate, build friendships and struggle for similar issues of social justice within the university context. How could we, the CIRCLE research staff, come to terms with many of the complexities of our roles as researchers, participants and facilitators? How do I, as one researcher and ultimately the author of this study, reconcile, recognize, and incorporate these differences and challenges into this research?

Critical ethnography opens an important space in a qualitative research exercise to ask and acknowledge these kinds of questions even if the answers are complex, layered, and difficult to elaborate on. What's more, I have found that this research perspective echoes many of the same positions that the critical educators I review in Chapter 2 take. Educators like Freire, (1970), Sleeter (1996) and Giroux (1997)

highlight the importance of linking research to action and the relevance all research participants' everyday practices bring to the research endeavor. Critical pedagogues underscore that these everyday practices are valid, important, and critical "truths" in the research process. Trueba and McLaren (2000) claim that in critical ethnography the researcher and the participants are partners intertwined in the research endeavor. Various ethnographic studies (Fine & Weiss, 1996; Behar, 1993; McCarthy Brown, 1991) provide examples of how incorporating the voices of the researcher, the study participants, other cultural actors, including the reader, offer the ethnographer the possibility to "abandon the role of narrator speaking in a single voice and begin to fashion a new voice transformed into a complex interweave of textuality within the multistranded time and pyschocultural space of history" (Trueba & McLaren, 2000, p. 50).

Some critics of critical ethnography believe that any claim to liberate participants or to pursue the freedom of a group is too ambitious an order for qualitative methodology (De Genova, 1997). To an extent I agree with this critique when stated in this way. No methodology or pedagogy for that matter has the capacity to achieve these outcomes by virtue of applying a methodology. Rather I believe that it is more helpful to frame critical ethnography by viewing the conditions under which the researcher and participants understand and can develop a common criticism of dominant discourses and hegemony. Once the research partners develop an understanding of the multiple discourses that exist in the world, they can begin to grapple with understanding how and why these dominant discourses have become such ingrained features of society and seek solutions. Participatory action research (Maguire, 1987) similarly espouses supporting

participants in defining, critiquing, and finding solutions to their concerns and problems through research initiated and conducted by the participants.

Regmi's (2004) research provides an important analysis of the transformational properties of an educational practice that validated the bicultural identities of its students. Regmi (2004) alludes to the researcher, practitioner, or educator who focuses on understanding the academic and community strategies that benefit minority students as someone who can become an advocate of those students' needs, identities, and rights. Critical ethnography has facilitated my "micro/macro integration of analysis" of educational practice at the university level (Trueba & McLaren, 2000, p. 41). This type of ethnography

> not only discloses hegemonic structures but opens new inter-actional and curricular strategies to capitalize on the linguistic and cultural richness of students' background through intensive, collaborative, joint construction of knowledge in the classroom [and community settings]. (ibid, p. 60)

For this reason, I view critical ethnography as mirroring methodologically the inherent purpose of the CIRCLE project, to question and challenge the Euro-centric everyday practices in higher education and develop alternative programs for diverse refugee and immigrant students and the university's neighboring newcomer communities.

The second qualitative research approach I employ is the extended case study. Burawoy (1991) explains the extended case study as "examining how a social situation is shaped by external forces" and argues that "participant observation can examine the macro world through the way the latter shapes and in turn is shaped and conditioned by the micro world, the everyday world of face-to-face interaction" (p. 6). I found the extended case study to be useful as it supports the notion that larger social forces influence micro-social realities. At the same time events in the micro world, like a

community service-learning course comprised of diverse students and youth, have the potential to shape and transform the macro-world, such as university departments and programs. Burawoy (2000) in his most recent edited volume gives the example that "ethnographies of schooling have always sought to explain how education is shaped by and at the same time influences wider patterns of social inequality" (p. 26).

Burawoy (2000) summarizes the extended case method through four dimensions. The first dimension is about participant observation or the "extension of the observer into the world of the participant" (p.26). This occurred during my participation in the 1996-1998 phase of the projects. The second dimension of the extended case method is about observations over time and space and understanding the situation you are observing as a social process. Over the two years that I was involved in the project and the subsequent time that has transpired until the writing of this dissertation, have given me much perspective on this social process. The third refers to extending out from micro processes to macro forces or put another way viewing the micro-situation as an expression of the macro structure based on our understanding of particular theories. For this reason I spent time reviewing the literature that sets the educational system within the context of institutional and bureaucratic structures encountered in society in Chapter 2. Finally, Burawoy (2000) believes that through this form of ethnography we can extend and expand on existing theory from the case we are studying.

Using Burawoy's (1991) notion of theory extension, I have looked for educational learning theories that "highlight aspects of the situation under study and then proceed to rebuild (or rethink) these theories by reference to the wider forces at work" (p. 6). To begin, I interpreted the CIRCLE project as a multi-layered process of

community service-learning. Specifically, I look at three dimensions or processes in the project. They include:

- refugee and immigrant student and youth (from similar and familiar ethnic communities) interactions through critical community service-learning
- peer and group learning and dynamics in the CSL experience
- individual student perspectives and knowledge that emerge as a result of the CSL experience

These three dimensions have facilitated my research question formation and have led me to focus on three educational theories that guide my research. These three theories are explained at length in Chapter 3 and extended to the specific research context in Chapter 4 of this dissertation. In the following findings and analysis chapter I take this extended theory as a guide in describing my findings and laying out my analysis.

In other words, in this study I attempted to blend two qualitative research approaches to produce a thick description and explanation of specific classroom and community activities and their effect or impact on the students. Moreover, I view these activities within the wider context of the university and expand on educational theories and curricular approaches that support diverse student development, peer-learning, and strategic community resource application (funds of knowledge) in a community service-learning relationship.

The two research approaches I have applied in this study offered insights that facilitated my understanding of project processes and ultimately in answering my research questions. In addition, these two research approaches support exploring and describing the different ways immigrant and refugee students and youth understood their

experiences, social relations, and interactions in the context of an alternative educational setting (community-service learning with similar ethnic communities) set within a dominant structure (the university). What is more, these approaches allowed me to view the data I collected through the prisms of educational theories and practice and then check this analysis with my peers and the participants in the study.

Data Collection

All data were generated over the 1996-1998 period as research material for the CIRCLE project. Research agendas were presented overtly, in clear, direct ways to all participants. Participants were viewed as "respondents, participants, stakeholders in a constructivist paradigm that is based on the avoidance of harm, fully informed consent and the need for privacy and confidentiality" (Punch 2000, p. 89). All students and youth guardians in this project were informed about the project and formally consented in writing to the use of their interviews, writing, photography and video interviews to be part of CIRCLE research and my future dissertation.

Archival documents and records from the CIRCLE project and the University of Massachusetts Amherst were used as data to provide background material related to the research site and context such as the origins and development of the CIRCLE project and the CSL courses it supported. I referred to archival material to better understand the University of Massachusetts' response to the growing number of refugee and immigrant students and local refugee communities at the time of the research.

Participant observation was a critical aspect of my research with the CIRCLE project, as is the case with most ethnographic studies. Participant observation is defined

as the "observations carried out when the researcher is an established participant in the scene studied" (Atkinson & Hammersley, 2000, p. 248) taking into consideration "several dimensions of variation such as how much participants know about the research and the researchers role and what sorts of activities the researcher is engaged in and how this locates her in the field" (p. 249). In this study my role as researcher was linked to my role as an active facilitator and project participant in the above-mentioned community service-learning courses. Adler and Adler (2000) describe this as the active membership role where "researchers become more involved in the central activities, assuming responsibilities that advance the group…observers in this role often take an overt stance as they forge close and meaningful bonds with setting members" (p. 380).

Participant observation is important to the qualitative research process because "through observation, the researcher learns about behaviors and the meanings attached to those behaviors….observation can range from highly structured, detailed notation of behavior guided by a checklist to more holistic description of events and behavior" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 84). At the same time I was deeply aware of the points that Punch (2000) cautions the observer to think about, primarily that participant observation is an essentially political act. Moreover, although the participant observer is closely involved in the research process, it is still one person's observations and field notes that should then be verified with the research participants. Through participant observation I prepared field notes and video notes that serve as data in this study. At the time of the research I made every effort to verify my observations with students and community members in the project. Participant observation allowed me to better understand and explain the CIRCLE project and its CSL courses as well as the

interactions among the students, facilitators and refugee youth. My participant observation and subsequent notes also served as a way to filter through various questions that arose during the research process.

Another important data gathering technique in this study were the unstructured open-ended or in-depth interviews that permit research participants' perspectives to unfold in a conversational manner. In-depth interviews are intended to "establish a human-to-human relation with a respondent and the desire to understand rather than to explain" (Fontana & Frey, 2000, p. 361). I conducted one in-depth interview with each of the ten student participants at the end of the "Here I am Now!" photography exhibit (1998) as part of our research agenda for CIRCLE. These ten interviews have since been transcribed and coded for analysis and recurring themes to respond to my research questions. The interviews I conducted with students took place in very informal settings such as my living room, a coffee shop, or the student's dorm room or apartment. I encouraged interviewees to describe their experiences in and perspectives of CIRCLE and the projects they developed in more circular "storytelling" ways. The friendships and trust that we had developed over the two or more years of work together allowed for a high level of rapport that made the interview process comfortable, natural, and free-flowing.

For each interview, I prepared an interview guide with my interview questions and the other important points I wanted to cover. However, this was strictly a guide, leaving ample room for expanding on or questioning the interviewee's comments as they arose and as I saw appropriate. I also included photographs from the "Here I am Now!" exhibit as part of the interview (I expand on this below). The rationale for using an

interview approach stems from the premise that "the participant's perspective on the phenomenon of interest should unfold as the participant views it, not as the researcher views it" (Marshall & Rossman, 1999, p. 80). In order to fully capture the perspectives of the participants and allow myself the space to be more attentive to the conversation, I tape recorded the interviews and later transcribed them for analysis. During the interview I also incorporated interviewees' or the youths' photographs to generate a deeper discussion about their collaborative work with peers and as mentors with the youth. I describe this specific technique in more detail below.

The next data collection approach I used was a review and analysis of the written narratives that undergraduate students produced during their community service-learning experiences. These include students' learning journal entries and reflection papers. Through the written narratives produced by students, I identify themes or dimensions of the project experience that seem to be significant for students in their education and community service-learning (Marshall & Rossman, 1999; Denzin, 1994; Fontana & Frey, 1994; Berger, 1997; Richardson, 1994). According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000) using narrative inquiry is,

> a way to understand experience. It is a collaboration between researcher and participants, over time in a place or series of places and in social interactions. An inquirer enters this matrix in the midst and progresses in this same spirit, concluding the inquiry still in the midst of living and telling, reliving and retelling, the stories of the experiences that make up people's lives, both individual and social. Simply stated.....narrative inquiry is stories lived and told. (p. 20)

Witherell and Noddings (1991) similarly support a model that incorporates written and oral narrative and dialogue in classroom life and educational research based on several central notions: "that we live and grow in interpretive or meaning making, communities;

that stories help us find our place in the world and that caring, respectful dialogue among all those engaged in educational settings-students, teachers, administrators-serves as the crucible for our coming to understand ourselves, others and the possibilities life hold for us" (p. 10).

Finally, I include examples of the visual narratives (actual photographs or slides there of) produced by students and youth as part of the CIRCLE, "Here I am Now!" project. This has primarily involved the individual photographs students and youth took but also includes various video segments we taped as students and youth introduced their photography at the inauguration at the Wheeler Gallery at U Mass on November 24, 1997. I was particularly interested in incorporating these visual narratives as data for this study. First, I believe they are important data to further our understanding of how students and youth visually speak about their experiences in alternative community service-learning projects that engage them with similar and familiar ethnic communities. Second, including this data elicits the artistic and creative talents of students versus only the written or academic texts traditionally reviewed in qualitative studies. Third, I believe that creating and displaying art propels the artist and the viewer into a public, political sphere. Therefore I think students' and youths' visual representations of their academic and community engagement not only serve as documentation of a project but also convey important historical, social, and political aspects of a community at a particular point in time.

The stories or narratives conveyed in photography have the potential to capture vital elements that define a community. Integrating artistic visual imagery into educational research is another way to incorporate what critical ethnography and critical

pedagogy call hinging the inquiry on the actions and voices of the participants. As educators we encourage students to develop their skills to problem solve and question their world. Similarly, "being an artist means developing a creative approach to the complexity of the world, and solving the problems that one poses to oneself through a visual medium whatever that medium may be" (Becker, 1997, p. 15)

Clandinin and Connelly (2000) view visual narratives like photography as "key documents in the context of narrative inquiry" and as "artifacts collected in our lives, that provide a rich source of memories" (p. 114). Again, the notion of documentation can be extended to the idea that

> once hung on a wall, placed on a floor, projected into a space in public view, performed, [art's] statement becomes part of the public sphere, the public discourse, and is subject to all the strengths and limitations of the society it has entered. (Becker, 1997, p. 17)

Therefore, I felt that it was important to not only view the photographs as an observer but also have the participants reflect on their photography and speak to the images they produced or helped youth produce.

For this reason I applied the reflective photography approach, a term coined by Harper (1987), while I interviewed the undergraduate students about their community projects and the exhibit, "Here I am Now!" This approach derives from a process of photo elicitation or using the students' and youths' photographs to initiate discussion. At the same time my intention was to expand on the meaning of the student's or youth's photograph, what it represents to them, who/what the subject is and why the subject is meaningful, what was happening at the time the photograph was taken, what were the students and youth doing? I found that bringing the photographs into the interviewing process was a way to bring students directly back to the experience of their project and

exhibit and it served as a marvelous tool to get students to deepen their descriptions or analysis of their experiences in CIRCLE.

I have also analyzed the video-tape footage we shot at the "Here I am Now! opening exhibit. To begin the inauguration, each student and youth was asked to briefly share something about his or her photograph. After the exhibit ended students evaluated the event, their photography and their collaborative work. This footage serves as an additional way to document how students and youth presented their photographs and described its meaning and why they chose to display at the exhibit. In other words, I applied students' and youths' photography and their video conversations about their photography as a way to expand on the conversation about community service-learning with similar and familiar ethnic groups.

Data Analysis

Denzin (2000) refers to the analysis of qualitative data as the "art of interpretation" because the researcher is confronted with "a mountain of impressions, documents and field notes [where she] faces the difficult task of making sense of what has been learned" (p. 500). Data analysis, according to Marshall and Rossman (1999), is the process of " bringing order, structure and meaning to the mass of collected data" (p. 111). Patton (1990) states,

> The challenge is to make sense of massive amounts of data, reduce the volume of information, identify significant patterns and construct a framework for communicating the essence of the data revealed. (p. 372)

Keeping these points in mind, I conducted a multi-layered analysis of the data. By multi-layered analysis, I mean viewing this educational process through the

perspectives, interactions, and activities of the diverse students and the youth, their collective learning in peer groups, and as individual students. A critical ethnographic approach both in the data collection stage and in the analysis and writing phase has provided an important lens for analyzing this data. This perspective calls on the researcher to focus in on the research protagonists' unique strengths and resources within a particular context. In my analysis I tried to highlight how study participants developed an alternative space of learning based on their critique of the university's systematic omission of their realities. Part of critical ethnography's mission is to reveal hegemonic practices that become normal everyday routines. In this sense my analysis has been supported by a perspective that encourages the researcher to listen to the voices of resistance within contexts of dominant culture. The extended case study approach has also influenced my analysis as it supports looking at the impact of both a macro-context (university) and the micro-arenas (classroom and community) on study participants through particular theory as a way to extend that theory.

The five above-mentioned data gathering techniques allowed me to analyze students' experiences from different vantage points of the project. First, the archival data provided clarifying information and background material to establish the social and historical context of the research project. This included: the origins and objectives of CIRCLE, University Massachusetts and surrounding community demographics, the university's position on community service learning at the time, existing CSL opportunities for diverse students, the campus's response to a growing diverse student body and particular historical events that took place during this research like the 1997

take-over of the administrative building at U Mass by students of color who were discontent with the programs and centers offered to diverse students.

Second, as an active staff member of the project, participant observation allowed me to prepare written and video taped field notes and personal comments. These field notes and comments served as an important way to understand and describe the dimensions of the project. I used the framework proposed by Bogdan and Biklen (1992) of recurring themes and dimensions to organize and analyze the data generated not only by my observations but also students' narratives and interviews. I employed Burawoy's (1991) argument that participant observation allows the researcher to "examine the macro world through the way the latter shapes and in turn is shaped and conditioned by the micro world, the everyday world of face-to-face interaction" (p. 6). From this approach, I applied my observations to view the interactions and experiences of the students and youth, the peer groups, and individual students in this study and set them with in the context of the university and community.

Next I analyzed the ten transcribed interviews that I conducted with each of the undergraduate students in 1998. Since these interviews serve as a main source of data in this study, I first analyzed each interview individually. Once I completed individual transcript analysis, I proceeded to identify themes and patterns that emerged from each transcribed interview. Subsequently I coded the interviews, paying close attention to themes that resonated with the research questions of the study. I developed a color-coded system to delineate recurring themes and sorted sections of each transcribed interview according to these themes. As I identified these themes, I continued to conduct a cross analysis of the themes and analyzed them through the three educational learning

theories I have described in Chapter 3 and 4. To ensure validity of the data as well as dependability of the data analysis I did the following:

- consulted with fellow researchers, colleagues and friends familiar with community service-learning, immigrant and refugee education in higher education, and the learning theories I use to frame this study (critical learning theory, situated learning theory and funds of knowledge theory)
- consulted additional literature related to the themes of this research
- consulted with the director of the CIRCLE project to share themes arising from the analysis

Subsequently, I analyzed the written narratives that students and youth produced. The written narratives again included student journals and individual reflection papers. Students were required to keep weekly journals pertaining to their community service-learning and classroom activities and group work. Journals were turned in once a week and course facilitators read and commented on each student's journal. The ten students in this study consented to having their journal entries photocopied and used for the purpose of CIRCLE research. Students were given articles about keeping a learning journal, and course facilitators encouraged them to reflect on classroom activities, readings, outreach experiences and group dynamics on a weekly basis. Students were also required to write 1 or 2 reflection papers over the course of a semester. Each reflection paper was generally between 4-6 pages in length, and students were given a variety of observational and personal reflection points to guide their papers.

Finally, I analyzed the photographs and video-taped conversations and evaluations of students in the "Here I am Now!" As I have explained, students' and

youths' photographs were included in the interview process as a way to elicit deeper conversations.

In a sense I applied a textual analysis approach that views "social texts as empirical materials that articulate complex arguments about race, class, gender in contemporary life" (Denzin, 2000, p. 509). In other words, by using student narratives to understand this particular phenomenon, I followed Lather's (1991) point that researchers must explore alternative ways of presenting and authorizing their texts. Lather (1991) states that to interpret theory of any sort, this theory must be anchored in the texts and realities it intends to analyze. I similarly viewed this data through the learning theories framework as a way to understand the field texts and narratives of the participants and ultimately interpret them.

Building on Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) work regarding the researcher and her relation to narrative inquiry, I included my own narratives (auto-bibliographical, research-related and interpretative) throughout the writing of the dissertation. Crapanzano (1980) writes that, as we learn about others, we also learn about the self. Indeed Fontana and Frey (2000) see this as critical in the interview process as well as the overall research process, stating that as we view the interviewee "as a human being, we can no longer remain objective, faceless interviewers, but become human beings and must disclose ourselves, learning about ourselves as we try to learn about others" (p. 374).

Summary

Working with students in a community/university process over various years nurtured close project staff team (educators like myself), student and youth relationships. We traveled to conferences together, drove to Springfield or Amherst to community meetings, attended community events, organized youth gatherings, attended photo galleries- all this aside from being in class together once a week for three hours. Students got to know me well, who my partner was, why I spoke Spanish, German and later Vietnamese, where I lived, what movies I liked etc. I also was got to know students' families, their friends, boyfriends, ex-girls friends and roommates. My four years of collaboration with the CIRCLE project and all its members was an intensely personal experience because not only did I have an opportunity to develop professionally but I had the joy of meeting colleagues, comrades, and friends that continue to be important allies in my life. Therefore, the writing of this dissertation and the analysis of the "data" have been a continuous dialogue and narrative event with my colleagues, the students in the study, and with myself.

In this chapter, I restated my research questions and I presented the research design of the dissertation. I then discussed the qualitative research approaches I applied to collect data and then analyze and answer my research questions. The next chapter describes the major findings of this study.

CHAPTER 6

PICTURE THIS!: STUDY FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Introduction

In this chapter I present the major themes representing how ten refugee and immigrant undergraduate students' understood their experiences and interactions in a series of community service-learning courses with similar and familiar ethnic communities. In their publication, Charity to Change, the Minnesota Campus Compact reminds us that service-learning is:

> a process through which students are involved in community work that contributes significantly: 1) to positive change in individuals, organizations, neighborhoods, and/or larger systems in a community; and 2) to students' academic understanding, civic development, personal or career growth, and/or understanding of larger social issues. This process always includes an intentional and structured educational/developmental component for students, and may be employed in curricular or co-curricular settings. Even with an expanded vision for the field, service-learning will undoubtedly continue to play a critical role in campus-community collaboration. (1999, p. 1)

My analysis points to the academic understanding, civic development, and personal or career growth, understanding and/or change of undergraduate students involved in the community service-learning project, Visual Portrayal and the photography exhibit "Here I am Now!" These projects emerged as a result of immigrant and refugee undergraduate student participation in CIRCLE courses and weekend workshops focusing on community development and education related to the refugee and immigrant experience.

In one particular weekend grant -writing workshop, students came up with the idea to provide refugee youth with cameras and train them in the basics of photography

to document and express visual images of their families, selves, and communities. Immigrant and refugee undergraduates, with the support of CIRCLE staff, developed, wrote, and ultimately succeeded in receiving a university Chancellor's office Counsel on Community, Diversity, and Social Justice grant to carry out this project. This included accompanying youth to photo exhibits at museums, developing and conducting workshops on photography, and working with youth to take photographs of their homes and communities. The undergraduates and youth then collaborated on framing selected photographs and titles with quotes and poems to accompany each photograph at the exhibit.

In this study I have looked at ten undergraduate students' experiences, interactions, written narratives, and photography as they relate to three dimensions of the Visual Portrayal project and "Here I am Now!" exhibit. These dimensions include:

1. the community service-learning relationship with refugee youth from familiar and similar ethnic communities
2. the collective learning process between familiar and similar university peers and community youth in the classroom and in the community service-learning experience.
3. the student's individual academic and personal experiences as a result of participating in a CSL course that focused on immigrant and refugee issues.

Here I also take the opportunity to restate the three research questions that guide this study.

- In what ways do immigrant and refugee students understand and make meaning of their participation in service-learning courses that engage them with ethnically, racially and culturally similar and familiar refugee youth?
- How do these students describe their experiences of learning and working collectively (in peer relationships) as mentors and organizers in their community service-learning outreach and classroom activities?
- How do refugee and immigrant undergraduate students reflect upon their academic and personal experiences after participating in a community service-learning program that incorporated experiential pedagogy, promoted situated learning, and legitimated students' identities, cultures and communities?

After spending considerable time analyzing, reviewing, coding, and referencing my field notes, students' writing, photography, and each student's interview transcript, I present the broad categories or recurring themes that have emerged from the data. These themes have facilitated answering and analyzing the research questions. Under each of these themes I refer back to the questions. Most importantly I incorporate students' narratives as the primary data to support the findings and analysis in this chapter. In addition, I use my own field notes as well as references to the literature to further develop each theme and section.

As a general comment, analyzing the study data has brought me to the realization that a community service-learning program that connects students and youth from like-ethnic communities through academic and community practices has important and lasting academic and personal impact on the participants. The study results indicate that students were influenced in significant ways through their experiences in this type of

alternative CSL program. The data show that students developed critical perspectives on:

- resisting and challenging the status quo, be it at the university or within other institutions impacting their lives;
- confirming and affirming their identity;
- turning to critical thought or social activism to empower themselves and their communities; and
- recognizing their creative and artistic potential for social change.

The narratives I include in this chapter support these themes and affirm that diverse student perspectives and knowledge have much to offer educational research and the community service-learning field.

Resisting and Challenging the Status Quo and its Oppressive Structures

The belief that all students can become active, critical, and engaged learners committed to transforming social inequalities and injustices is powerful. Experiential and critical educators promote approaches that nurture mutual learning outside of the classroom to develop such skills. Through the observation of a problem, conceptualization and definition of the problem, participation and action in an aspect of the problem, and guided critical reflection, scholars affirm that educators can guide students to become critical agents of change (Cone & Harris, 1996). Through the application of critical and experiential pedagogy that promoted peer-learning in the context of capitalizing on students' strategic and cultural resources as refugee and

immigrants, I believe participants in this study developed critical capacities to reflect, critique, and act to transform the conditions under which they learned and lived.

According to Giles and Eyler (1994), Dewey's main critique of the educational system was that it had not served society as the cultivator of democratic communities nor had it led to a more humane and moral society. Dewey believed that schools would never meet this goal if they continued to passively impart knowledge. Instead, Dewey promoted the idea that "to democratize schools was to have students experience the mutuality of social life through service" (Giles & Eyler, 1994, p. 82). Dewey and later educators like Freire believed that students who are not involved in community action initiatives are not engaged as critical citizens working toward democratic change.

Through a combination of critical pedagogy and a service-learning component where peers learned collectively in similar and familiar ethnic communities, we found that students were capable of exploring and contesting traditional notions of power and authority on their campuses and in their communities. In this study I also found that through real-life contexts and experiences learners became critical of the status quo and its oppressive structures. Becoming comfortable with critical and service-learning pedagogy, however, takes exposure, practice and guidance. It is also important to remember that every teaching and service situation is different and dependent on the particular group of learners and community members you are working with.

Over the two-year period of this study, the facilitators in the CIRCLE courses fluctuated between 2-4 graduate students and one constant faculty member (the director of the project). As graduate student facilitators and faculty we entered all classroom discussions as participants, using our own personal examples and stories. Facilitators

made it a practice to engage in class group work not merely as teachers or observers but also as participants in the discussions. We also believed in critically guiding student discussion to avoid, for example, stereotyping or over simplifying structural social issues. Hodagneu-Sotelo and Raskoff (1994) recommend that instructors be prepared to counter misconceptions by posing probing questions, providing critical feedback on student papers, and challenging students' misinterpretations when they occur. In sum, our aim in our teaching methodology was to model critical pedagogy where teachers are active learners, listeners, participants, and facilitators rather than authoritative controllers.

In CIRCLE we intentionally presented students with materials, activities, and classroom exercises that modeled what experiential and critical learning is and how it can be applied. We discussed Freire and other critical educators and practiced their methods. We also provided examples of projects where immigrant and refugee community members became the educators, researchers, leaders and the change agents in development initiatives. As facilitators we tried to be examples through practice. We encouraged students to practice and model the techniques we presented in the classroom, in their community service experiences (ice breakers, agenda setting, fish bowl activities, simulations, games, visual and drawing activities, role playing, puppetry, popular theater, community mapping, fotonovelas, creative evaluation techniques, etc.). In addition, we were diligent in building an environment of trust and respect by applying simple strategies like sitting in a circle and promoting student input for class agenda setting to more complex notions and ground rules of acknowledging and respecting language, silence, and social differences such as sexual orientation, race, culture, or

socio-economic disparities. Below two students commented on how they understood and made meaning of a course that was structured in this way:

> All the skills we learned in the class are adapted to be used when working with the youth in the community. In many of the meetings with the youths, we simulate exactly what we did in class. That saves a lot of time and planning because we know what works and what doesn't work. Sometimes, when we are under pressure because of time or changes in plans, we can just think back to one of the class sessions and choose among the many activities we've done. Some of the activities are so flexible that we can improvise and alter them to meet our needs. Also having already done the activities ourselves, in the class, we have an idea of what the youths would enjoy and what they would not enjoy. This is a very clever and creative and effective method to teach community development skills. (student journal)

> Since this class focuses more on discussion and exercises, most of the time we spend is working in groups. This is something I haven't done since high school. At first I was reluctant to participate in the group exercises. I felt that I was too old for it. After a while, I began to realize that these little exercises had significant meaning behind them and they related to the topics we discussed and the community work we were doing (student paper)

Through guidance and reflection with course facilitators and fellow students, learners questioned what they read, discussed, or observed in the classroom and their community service. In many instances students were encouraged to apply a more in-depth analysis of power and oppression. For example, students participated in simulations like Bafa Bafa or Star Power where they were divided into groups and power cards are unevenly distributed or deliberately given to one group. These games relate to broader societal issues of unequal power, social behavior, dominant culture's rules, and decision-making. We adapted these games to include the immigrant and refugee experience and notions of culture, ethnicity, and language. Through such games and subsequent discussions students were encouraged to look at societal issues and problems of power distribution from an individual, institutional, and community

perspective and then move into an analysis of the interactions and contradictions amongst these various perspectives.

As students became more involved in their community service work, they revisited these discussions and activities. They also applied concepts from the readings and class discussions to their actual community service-learning experiences. Through reflection, students recognized that different teaching and outreach strategies could actually challenge traditional top-down styles of learning and teaching. Students realized the courses in CIRCLE and the service-learning components were spaces for participating in different and innovative approaches to academic learning and community outreach. Here a student working with local high school students wrote about his experiences by referring back to an article he read on Freire. He wrote:

> Through outreach and community work, one of the most important lessons I am learning is the significance of dialogue. The article, "Key Principles of Freire", states that everyone needs to be both a learner and a teacher. This is possible through genuine dialogue. As I mentioned earlier, I learn from the kids I work with by having casual conversations with them. I am sure these kids are happy to have university students come too. I remember when I was their age I loved having student teachers. In fact, I remember most of the student teachers better than some of my actual teachers. Some of Freire's experiential techniques helped me realize many things, things about myself, my culture and the educational system. Problem-posing is something I've been learning more about too. Coming from Korea, education to me was the old "banking approach" with the teachers and the books possessing all the knowledge. Then coming to America was a total cross-cultural experience. I'm learning how to interact with others and that I learn through experiences and these experiences are helping me find my identity in this community and to understand what kind of a person I am.

Educators using standard curriculum typically control students' learning lives. The expected status quo behavior in most mainstream educational institutions is to work individually, be obedient, listen, ask safe questions, respond but do not contest or

challenge. Most of the students enrolled in CIRCLE classes had never taken a course where their input, decisions, comments, critiques, or opinions were motives for action (i.e. creating a community project or rethinking a class activity) or change (changing the syllabus, negotiating workshop agendas or facilitating the development of a new youth committee in the community). Some of the first-generation refugee and immigrant undergraduate students were quiet, shy, and unfamiliar with active participation in the classroom. Other students had attended high schools or colleges where they were required to debate and defend a particular point of view. Most students hadn't had any experience in including their own stories or those of their families and communities into the university classroom or community service experiences. For this reason the courses were structured around readings that reflected students' community realities and modeled learning activities and skills building through experiential exercises. Here a few students wrote how their CSL classroom experiences influenced them. Important in their discussions were the ideas of challenging and resisting systems that have traditionally ignored these students' realities:

> During the first classes, we had to talk about ourselves. At first I was befuddled. I had to explain many things about myself that I never had to do in any other class so it was difficult. I never really had to think about what I had to say about myself. I was surprised to find new things about myself. During one session, we did an activity where we began to look at our identities and where we see ourselves in society. Now that I think about it I didn't really know how to place myself. I guess I am still finding out who I am. (student reflection paper)

> My first impression of this class was "I am not learning anything". I thought the work we do in class is not rigorous. I tried to think how we were going to learn from all these discussions and group activities and not from textbooks or formal lectures. After a few classes I discovered what we learn in class is useful in the real world. Also students and teachers are both facilitators in classroom discussions and in the decision making which is very different from other classes. In most classes teachers give

> lectures and assignments to do, expecting students to understand by just reading a book. Now when I look back on some of those classes I can't remember a thing. (student journal entry)

In another example an undergraduate student reflected on this critical classroom and the value he encountered in listening to and learning from his classmates versus being lectured to by a teacher:

> One of my favorite aspects of this class is our way of learning. I believe that our format of learning is very different instead of learning through textbooks we use real life situations. This format is more useful because it doesn't want us to memorize information and regurgitate back but promote us to think and analyze. My favorite way of learning and I think the most useful is like the discussions we have in class. I don't mean like in other classes where the TA or the professor only talk and we listen, but instead where the teacher gives us a theme and the whole class participates and is involved. I enjoy this because it gets people thinking about what we are doing and we can draw from each other's experiences. Everyone has rich experiences like our teachers and facilitators have their knowledge and the students have theirs. Together we have new ideas because what one person thinks may be new to what another person thinks. When I hear my classmates give their opinions or ideas I need to listen. Another very important way of learning is listening. By listening to others I can gain a different perspective from what I am used to. This skill can help me in the future, and I could have an easier time with things like cooperation, solving conflicts and just understanding people better. (student reflection paper)

The students in this study comprehended the value of the knowledge of their fellow students and community partners. This was not an automatic process, though. Students who have been taught that "teacher talk" (Shor, 1996) is the most valued kind of knowledge initially resist a course format that centralizes students' experiences or encourages students to facilitate class discussion. In this case, I believe the process of coming to understand that your fellow classmate or average community member (shop keeper, factory worker) possesses valuable and important knowledge is a form of resisting and challenging the status quo of the Euro-centric university. In Chapter 2, I

reviewed the literature that discusses the formation of knowledge regimes as an evolving political, social, and economic project focused on making "Euro-centric knowledge and worldviews the norm and standard" (Feagin, Vera, & Imani, 1996, p. 53). At most universities, knowledge has typically been constructed by racially, socially, economically, and gender dominant groups. The idea that legitimate knowledge can come from students, lay people, or the common worker is quite a radical concept. Students have often never been exposed to the idea that students or community members can generate their own knowledge or research. Moreover, in CIRCLE having faculty and graduate students of color as project staff was a key aspect to gaining student of color trust. I believe this modeling encouraged undergraduate students of color to feel comfortable to go out and mentor the refugee youth in their community service-learning work as well as critique the institution. Here an undergraduate student wrote about his impression of CIRCLE classes that took this distinct teaching approach and questioned traditional knowledge systems:

> My attitude toward the class at first was one like any other class I take, the kind where I go to class and do what is assigned, the sort of class where I could work but not have to think afterward. After the first couple of classes though I realized that this is not that type of course. I started to understand the course better as we talked more. Actually I started to care for the course more as we talked more. I don't mean when we went over what the requirements were or what we had to do, but the discussions about various matters like minority welfare, community building and the voices of minorities. After a couple of discussions I felt myself pulled into them and able to open up. This was when the times in class went by much quicker and became more enjoyable for me. I realized that the things that we were concerned with and learning about were not things that could not be forgotten because they were issues that surrounded us all the time. I was learning about things that involved not only me, but also my cultural community, issues that concern me and the things I care for. I never thought a class could promote something like that. The class atmosphere was less like a classroom and more like an activity I signed up for on my own. This was apparent through the entire class and people felt relaxed. I

> learned a lot about myself, about learning and critical thinking, about leadership and action. I learned a lot about myself and how others think differently. By this I mean I see what or how I have changed to the cultures around me. I see how my culture of being Chinese-American has changed my attitude toward other cultures too. (student reflection paper)

To develop, affirm, and expand on the refugee and immigrant perspective, one that is generally a minority perspective within dominant culture, CIRCLE facilitators collected materials that underscored African, African-American, Latino, Asian, Asian-American and other immigrant intellectual thought, scholarly publications, international press, and activist writing. Our intention here was to expose students to materials they rarely read during their university careers and confirm that "minority positions are sophisticated and often richer with strategies for addressing social problems than dominant discourse and [that students] can learn to access such discourses themselves" (Sleeter, 1996, p. 130). Shor (1996) reminds us that,

> a productive, congenial classroom is far more preferable to an unproductive, chilly one, but it takes more than productivity, collaboration, and circle-seating to make a learning process critical or empowering. Being busy and collaborative is not the same as being critical of the status quo. The borders of critical culture appear when discourse questions existing knowledge and unequal power relations, when it imagines democratic alternatives departing from authoritarian business-as-usual, when it connects subjectivity to history while relating personal contexts to social contexts and academic contexts, when it situates the theme of social justice at the center of the knowledge-making enterprise. (p.180)

Reading and discussing critical and culturally relevant texts is one way of initiating discussion and engagement in the experiential classroom. Equally important, however, are the activities educators develop to further stimulate learning, dialogue, and reflection. Using experiential pedagogy techniques such as role-playing that link the refugee and immigrant experience to notions of family and cultural systems, the cycles

of power and oppression, community wisdom, and minority positions allow students to compare their worldviews with dominant community perspectives. Other techniques we developed included: exploring the refugee camp experience through community mapping, the resettlement process through a fotonovela/story telling experience, language disparities through simulations, intergenerational conflict within communities through the use of puppets, dominant societies treatment of immigrants historically applying popular theater techniques like forum theater (Boal, 1979). Below a student recollected a role-play related to the unequal treatment of immigrant and refugee groups in their host country. This student clearly demonstrated her capacity to critique mainstream institutional structures and their perceptions of and actions toward newcomers through this medium:

> I remember the play we made up in class. It was about an older refugee man going into a store and sitting on the floor to wait while his wife shopped. He sees a bin of candy and begins to unwrap and eat the sweets. Everyone in the store stares at him as they pass by. Later on a neighbor sees him and explains that he can't do that in this store, he quickly apologizes and pays the clerk. Through this skit we talked at length about cultural difference, cultural shock, and what it feels like to be a recently arrived immigrant especially for our parents and grandparents. When native born people see immigrants practicing something that they think is not "normal" they will treat them differently because they think they are not part of their group, this is how immigrants are often treated, this is how unequal treatment begins (student journal).

Solorzano (1989), Stabile (1997), and others see action as central to making academic content meaningful and transforming. For this reason CIRCLE staff chose to integrate a service-learning and critical pedagogy component that focused on working with immigrant and refugee undergraduates in peer groups and connecting them with youth from neighboring refugee communities. In the classroom learners became active participants modeling the critical teaching methods we practiced and discussed.

Subsequently students engaged in the service-learning experience with refugee communities based on their own knowledge and their classroom learning. Students were guided to reflect on their community work from their ethnic, cultural, and academic lens thereby learning concrete skills that allowed them to question status quo structures within a community development education context. Here different students wrote about this process:

> action and reflection are perhaps the most significant part of the course. Action refers to the actual work that we all do with the refugee youths in the community. Reflection is the opportunity for each of us, as individuals or as a group, to reflect on what we have done and to share our reflections with others in the class. (student journal)

> Freire's principles make so much sense to me since I've always been the type to ask why all the time. It is really important to always ask why something is the way it is/find meaning to what is going on. It's too bad that more people don't slow down and ask questions and reflect on what they're doing; no wonder why things don't change. Reflection is so crucial to growth and transformation. If you don't stop to think about what you're doing, how can you know for sure that it's working or not. You need to reflect to see the larger picture and clarify your objectives. If you can make meaning of what your're doing, the more likely you'll learn and continue to learn and not feel overwhelmed or burnt out or hopeless. (student reflection paper)

Here another student discussed the act of listening as a political act, an action that can lead to community change:

> As a community worker you need to spend time listening and dialoguing to find out what people want to change. You can't achieve anything without their help. Working from their experiences is much more effective than using the experience of the community worker who is often an outsider. Thinking about these ideas had made me think about my role in working with the Vietnamese youth. At first, my attitude was that I was going to go there and just start up a girls youth group and do all these activities related to photography. After reading and talking about Freire, it hit me that things aren't that simple. What I needed to do first is to listen to what the youth had to say, especially the girls, and find out what they want. There can't be a girls group if we don't have any Vietnamese girls!

> I'm Vietnamese but not a young girl so how could I possibly know what they want or need without listening to them first. (student reflection paper)

In effect, the model we developed in CIRCLE promoted multiple arenas of action, action in the classroom, in the community, and in students' personal choices as a result of their involvement and reflection. Below an undergraduate student from Cambodia, wrote about the complexities and the benefits of working with youth from the same ethnic community. This student realized the power she possesses to support Cambodian youth because of her insider position:

> I have learned that my culture is a part of me. It is something that is valuable in being a leader to the Cambodian youth. I shouldn't take it for granted and I should use it to my advantage. To be honest in the beginning I did not want to work with the Cambodian youth at all. There were two reasons for this. First of all I wanted to experience a different group of people. I wanted to learn about a variety of people and be exposed to their ways and views. Secondly I was afraid of what the parents of the youths might say about me working with their children. In my community adults tend to think it is being nosy and butting in when one talks to their children about their lives. They do not like personal matters to be discussed outside the home. Now I am glad that I have ended up working with the Cambodian youth. I still have all the fears that I mentioned above but I know that being with the Cambodian youth is the best place for me. It is the place where I can have the most influence, be a role model and learn. I think it is good for them too that someone from their culture is working with them. (student reflection paper)

In this study, undergraduate students developed their CSL project with neighboring refugee youth to learn about photography and create a photography exhibit that reflected aspects of their communities. In many of their interviews, reflection papers, and journal entries, study participants expressed their desire to challenge the educational system as well as mainstream culture's image about who refugee and immigrant students and youth are. The title, "Here I am Now!" is a call out to society to take notice and understand refugee and immigrant young people as present-day subjects

capable of self-portrayal and self-explanation. Such challenge and resistance to dominant society's notions of the refugee and immigrant experience resonated throughout the process of the project. In their initial collaborative proposal delivered to the Chancellor's office, CIRCLE students emphasized their desire to:

> promote mutual respect and understanding around the experiences of Cambodian and Vietnamese youth communities and their families within the larger university community. Due to the lack of understanding and awareness of these diverse communities at the university, we feel our community outreach projects with newcomer youth can bridge the gap between the academy and the immigrant and refugee communities in Amherst, Northampton and Springfield. Specifically with the Cambodian (Khmer) and Vietnamese youth, we focus on collective leadership development so that these youth can empower themselves to promote mutual respect within and between their communities as well as encourage activism towards a better understanding of their identities and experiences in the U.S. In addition, we, as U Mass undergraduate students, have the opportunity to link our academic coursework to community outreach through our engagement in Education 329 and our Student Advisory Council. As mentors and facilitators in community building, we recognize the need for immigrant and refugee youth to have educational opportunities to work with undergraduate who have had similar lived experiences (*A Collective Visual Portrayal: Photography and Art with Newcomer Undergraduates and Youth*: student proposal presented to the Chancellors' Counsel on Community, Diversity, and Social Justice, March 13, 1997)

In an interview with an undergraduate student after the inauguration of the "Here I am Now!" photography exhibit, a participant talked about Cambodian youth challenging mainstream culture's desire to "see" Cambodian refugee youth as weak, scared and nostalgic about Cambodia and its dramatic past. Dominant society, in this students' eyes, is not interested in the identities of U.S. urban bicultural youth who wrestle with feelings about their feet being equally planted in U.S. popular culture and the identity of their home culture. In this interview, the student alluded to the power of

representation and the acts of resistance embedded in refugee youth portraying their community the way they see it and the way they see themselves as one of its members:

> I sensed some amazed faces (in the audience) when the youth focused on their lives today rather than the past. For example the Vietnamese as well as the Khmer youth photos were representations of their everyday family/friend/school/ "present" lives. When the Khmer youth presented photos of friends, chilling in whatever setting, throwing up their "gang" signs, people seemed to be disheartened that they chose to present that aspect of their lives rather than their expected "family life" or "past lives". The project took its own turn and became a very personal, prideful form of release, rather than following a form of structure or directed ideals for the expression of identity. What I have come to realize is that if I had been given the same chance today, I most likely would portray my friends, family, pop culture in which I belong while focusing on the aspects of Ethiopia that I have held on to or those that continue to play a role in my life. These in turn break down barriers of stereotypical concepts, work as a release for me and my frustrations through time, and are stepping stones from which others can feel that it is alright to proclaim the self, simply through a camera; for what comes out of it is a stronger voice than what anyone can speak for us. To showcase yourself, your friends, family, history, and everything else with which you identify is a form of *activism*. This wasn't a project to "help" anyone or define anyone. (student reflection paper)

Another student stated that the she learned a great deal from the youths' photography because it was their way of being freed from the restrictions and the limitations of words:

> They [the youth] have taught me so much through their photography; their insights about how they see their teachers treat them and how they really appreciate their parents' efforts but don't know how to tell them or show them. (student evaluation)

Cultivating peer relations in the community service-learning experience amongst like refugee and immigrant university students and youth created a space to discuss issues about the status quo and the contradictions that existed both in their academic worlds and in their own ethnic community. In many community meetings students and youth talked about the different standards and norms that exist for different people in

their schools and in their communities. One of the youth decided to take photographs of his father, a respected medicine man in his community. In his stories about his father, the youth talked about the challenges he and his family had experienced since moving to this country. On the one hand he noted that U.S. society wants to "celebrate" the diversity of the immigrant experience. On the other hand he had been made to feel, on many occasions, that his father's work was inferior to western medicine, that his practice was a "nice folkway" to help out but that in no way could it compare to serious, authentic western medicine. Stories like these helped students talk with youth about very complex topics like status quo, knowledge regimes, and institutional racism.

The CIRCLE project provided undergraduate students with a university and community experience linked to their newcomer realities yet we did not attempt to romanticize this experience. Students and youth struggled to work together and find common ground to develop their projects. The also grappled with many of the contradicting cultural norms that exist in their own ethnic communities, ie: expectations of youth to be quiet and studious and to be respectful and silent in the presence of adults, the role of women, the taboos of dating before marriage, and the notions that embracing too much U.S. culture can lead to waywardness. Students and youth openly talked about the tensions they felt in their families and communities when they adapted some of the social and cultural norms of the host society. The concepts of adaptation, assimilation, and incorporation that we explored in class allowed students to understand and, in their own way, transmit to the youth the different processes that surface in the immigrant and refugee experience.

For the staff working in CIRCLE one of our main missions was to cultivate and support cohorts of racially and ethnically diverse immigrant and refugee undergraduate students to engage as learning partners with culturally familiar communities. The project sought to enhance students' community development skills through alternative pedagogical approaches and community projects like the photography initiative. Students were encouraged to look critically and collectively at community and university issues through their racial, ethnic, immigrant/refugee status, socio-economic, and cultural lenses and grapple with the tensions, contradictions, and complexities that arose. Course facilitators encouraged students to apply their expertise and know-how to develop their collective projects. Through the Visual Portray project and "Here I am Now!" exhibit students challenged other aspects of the status quo. These included speaking out about U.S. educational institutions' lack of understanding about and support toward newcomer communities. Students also challenged the concepts of who represents whom and how the "other" is fully capable of representing him/herself. In addition, this project challenged often conservative, isolated, or patriarchal immigrant enclaves to think about the shifting roles of refugee youth in the United States.

As refugee and immigrant undergraduates and youth formed stronger relationships and were able to discuss concerns related to their common identities, they began to more clearly articulate their ideas and concerns through their project. Moreover, this coming to together around ideas of identity and representation facilitated youth and students to carry out their photography activities as a collective learning community. One participant who was most familiar with the art of photography and led many of the workshops wrote:

> Our workshops were a chance for the kids to ask questions and see the possibilities of how to capture an image. It was also a chance for them to try out what we taught them by doing set up shots. Going to the Mount Holyoke College photo exhibit on the situation of children in Bosnia gave the youth a chance to see different ways to present images that were complemented with text. Most of the kids thought that this form of presentation added positively to the work and the impact on the viewer. The opening day of the exhibit was a special day for all of us. It gave kids a chance to talk about their work and what it meant to them. I was surprised how many people showed up to hear the voices of these young individuals. These voices did not just come from their mouths but also through the images they put together (student reflection paper)

Miron and Lauria (1998) believe that collective forms of student resistance emerge when students are "organized around racial solidarity and linked to categories of social identity, especially racial/ethnic identities" (p. 190). Active resistance is viewed by these authors as "embedded in human agency and in particular with the struggles for civil and other kinds of human rights" (p. 190). In the case of the CIRCLE project, refugee and immigrant participants agreed that developing a university-wide photography exhibit was indeed an example of student and youth action and resistance, not only within social institutions like the university but also their own ethnic communities. As one student noted:

> Working with a community has many challenges. I hadn't realized that many parents did not want their daughters to go to the community center because there were boys there and they didn't want their daughter to be connected to a "hang out" place. Now I'm spending a lot of time talking to the Vietnamese boys at VACA. It makes me feel good to know that I can have a positive impact on them and I can be a good female role model for them. I don't think they get to interact with females on a non-romantic level very often. It's important that they know how to respectfully communicate with females as friends and acquaintances. I'm hoping that in the future they will be able to view females as friends/colleagues and not just potential romantic partners....with any luck, VACA can be an environment "safe" for girls and parents will feel comfortable to let their daughters join in on activities here. (student interview)

Another student wrote about her excitement to continue the CIRCLE student/youth model with other immigrant and refugee groups nationally. Although her comments could be viewed as idealistic, I believe they represent what the undergraduate students struggled with and hoped for by dedicating their time to an alternative learning and organizing endeavor:

> I loved working not only with the refugee youth but with my friends who are refugees and immigrants too! My vision for this group is that we'll become a nationally known association. Hopefully we'll be able to reach more kids out there, as mentors and as guides. We'll be known internationally even, having people say...CIRCLE? Yeah I know it's the best center for community development, you should join! (student journal)

Responses like these provide evidence that CSL experiences that engage diverse students in alternative service-learning models with familiar socio-economic, racial, and ethnic communities do impact students. The projects' educational and political agenda intentionally linked minority students of color with marginalized refugee communities. The project also centered on cultivating a learning environment that promoted new forms of knowledge and highlighted the multiple histories, identities, and group issues of immigrant and refugee students and their communities. As Bartolome (1994) notes, "working with subordinated students calls for a perception shift- a shift from a narrow and mechanistic view of instruction to one that is broader in scope and takes into consideration the socio-historical and political dimensions of education" (p. 176). The recognition of immigrant and refugee students as cultural insiders and bicultural mediators, with unique histories, experiences, and abilities that guide them as leaders was for many the platform that helped launch their critiques about their academic and community experiences. Below a student reflected openly about past educational instances that made her feel voiceless. In a sense her reflection is a critique of an

academic model that rarely seeks to incorporate her understanding and perceptions of the world as a refugee living in the United States:

> In this class I have learned that I have a voice. This voice is not soft, weak or powerless. Rather it is loud, strong and powerful. I've always had a problem with expressing myself in the classroom. It was always the voices of the others in the classroom that represented the ideas and expressions of the class. Thus the silent voices, such as mine, were left unheard. I learned to stay silent. In a way my shyness to speak evolved into a belief that what I had to say was not important. I became used to not speaking so that I began to believe that I truly didn't have anything to say. In this class my urge to speak and voice myself was awakened. The issues that we discuss in class beg to have responses because they revolve around my experience. I found myself unable to allow the discussions to go by me without acknowledging the issues. I found that I had so many opinions and reactions to the ideas presented in class. To my own surprise I found myself speaking up in almost every class. Not only that but I felt comfortable doing so. I had a sense that the people were truly listening to my ideas and processing them in their minds. They seemed to respect what I had to say and find value in my words. (student journal)

Reflective writing like this example was a core part of CIRCLE course requirements. This writing was crucial in developing students' capacity for analysis, inquiry, and critique. Sleeter (1996) explains, "writing allows students to define issues, express feelings, and develop descriptive texts for analysis" (p. 129). Sleeter later quotes Smyth (1992), "creating personalized narratives is also a way of guarding against the rampant intellectual imperialism so prevalent in teaching, whereby outsiders provide the packaged and commodified answers to the issues that are non-questions for teachers" (p. 129). Students' weekly journals and individual reflection papers provided this type of space, a space that legitimated comparing and contrasting their own ethnic, cultural and racial experiences with their experiences in the classroom and their community service. One student wrote about the importance of journaling as a way to

bring her knowledge to the classroom as well as reflect on what she learned in the course:

> writing journals every week gives me the opportunity to think about certain issues discussed during class and apply them to my life and the community experience. Collecting my thoughts in my journal gives me a chance to share my experiences and expand on what I've been learning in class.

Another student summarized that writing and reflecting about the self is a way to produce knowledge, a form of resistance to banking forms of education in traditional settings:

> everybody has a story to tell someone about his or her life and people learn about themselves from life. People's experience come from their stories. Knowledge comes from their experiences. I've learned about myself from my experience and this is knowledge.

Students' connection to similar and familiar ethnic communities opened opportunities for students to express a different type of academic language, one that focused on their lives and their communities. At the same time these narratives provide important examples as to how students, when given the opportunity, become critical documenters of and advocates for academic and community change that challenge established ideas and norms. Below a student reflected on government policies regarding refugee and immigrant communities based on a class reading and various class discussions. This quote demonstrates how commonly held ideas can change when students are encouraged to engage with a variety of positions and counter histories. This participant talked about his own journey in re-thinking the impact of government policy on his refugee community in the United States. Eventually this student became involved in organizing a community speak-out against welfare reform:

> I used to think that government's decision to pass welfare reform policies was appropriate because it was not fair for American citizens to spend a lot of tax money on welfare, Medicare, and other services that mostly benefit immigrants and people who do not pay taxes. What I did not see was the fact that a great deal of immigrants pay taxes but do not have the same rights, benefits or priorities as American citizens. This does not seem fair, why doesn't the U.S. government do something to balance this? I now see how the U.S. government can make unjust decisions that directly affect my community. My ideas about the welfare reform situation have changed as a result of taking this course and talking with my peers (student interview).

Through their community service-learning experiences, students also became aware of dominant culture's desire to study, research, and ultimately transform minority communities into reflections of the mainstream. In the following excerpt, a student spoke about an outsider's attempt to research the Vietnamese community she was working with (and a member of) without taking the time to become informed or respectfully get to know the community:

> Yesterday at VACA (Vietnamese American Community Association) a graduate student studying ESL at one of the local colleges came to talk to the director. I was in the office at the time. She wanted to know about the Vietnamese community because she had a research project to complete.....I felt that she was unprepared, just wanted information and hadn't done any prior research. It was like she expected us to educate her. I don't think so! She should have gone to the library first and done some reading before she came to us. I felt like she was wasting our time. I told her that there were books about Vietnamese immigrant and refugees. She said that this research was not a library-based paper rather she had to talk to people. I thought it was strange that the paper only had to be 5 pages long. I am sorry you can't write about my community in 5 pages! What kind of graduate program was this? If we had known why she was here (something more specific than just...I have this research paper to write), then maybe I would be more open to helping her. (student interview)

Later in our interview this same student questioned the role of the researcher and the situation of the researched. In essence this student is deeply questioning the oppressive

structures of traditional research disciplines that have had a long trajectory of misrepresenting the realities of the communities they study:

> Recently when I came home from my work in Springfield, I got a message from this Anthro major at school who wanted to talk to me about my work at VACA. She had heard from someone that I was there for my Women's Studies class. My reaction was similar to that of the Elms student. I probably shouldn't jump to conclusions about her because I don't know what she wants yet. I just get a little defensive and uneasy when some white people want to make me or my community the subject of research. How do I know that they're not going to distort the words/truth/reality some how? What are they going to use the information for? I just feel that they could easily misuse, misunderstand and abuse the knowledge we share with them. One of the reasons I get so defensive is because so very often, outsiders will come in and distort the real image. They pay little respect to the insider's feelings and interests. Take the Walt Disney movie Pocahontas where the truth about a group of Native Americans was totally exploited and false and awful stereotype about Native people were perpetuated. (student interview)

The visual images that are part of this project speak strongly about student and youth resistance. For example the poster advertising the "Here I am Now!" exhibit is a representation of students challenging the status quo. In the poster photograph we see only the feet of a solitary youth in one of the community neighborhoods. She is wearing a pair of plastic flip-flop sandals while standing at the edge of a curb surrounded by cigarette butts and other pieces of trash. When I asked students to comment on the photograph, 6 of the 10 interviewees stated that they felt the picture represented standing up to society or showing society that as refugees/immigrants they were here to stay and capable of many things. Even in their typical Asian flip-flops they were going to make their mark and pave their own way. Other students talked about the photograph by describing a young person in a poor U.S. urban neighborhood with roots in a foreign culture but with their feet firmly planted in their new surroundings. Yet other students

described the beauty of the photograph and said it was a statement of youth moving toward their dreams.

The recurring theme of challenging and resisting oppressive structures is apparent in this study and the narratives presented in this section. I believe they offer significant evidence that part of the meaning students acquired through this project was related to contesting the status quo and its constraints in their lives. The data also indicate that students who experienced service-learning within similar ethnic communities, anchored on a peer or mentor model, developed strong and trusting relationships that provided a safe and comfortable environment to question and challenge what mainstream society sees and calls normal or standard. Over the semesters that students worked with their ethnically similar counterparts, they were able to relate to one another on many different levels. Through their collective action and reflection, students became acutely aware of the institutional, communal, economic, political, and societal structures that influence their lives. Students' capacity to challenge these structures was particularly salient in the data I collected. As Keene (2000) points out in his presentation on community service-learning, "action helps students overcome the sloth of institutional culture and holistic experiential learning enables students to overcome the atomizing forces of the standard curriculum" (p.24). Many more student narratives in this data set speak about student and youth acts of resistance and questioning but for the sake of space I have had to limit my examples to the ones offered in this section.

Confirming and Affirming Identity

Through their community service-learning photography project with youth from similar ethnic communities, all ten participants discussed, in different ways, how they felt their identities had been affirmed through this process. Regmi (2004), in a study looking at a different aspect of the CIRCLE project, described this process as a transformational learning model that "begins with the experiences of the learners and develops as learners construct new meaning systems through their own experiences that ultimately lead to new levels of consciousness" (p. 104).

The community service-learning experience offered undergraduate students an opportunity to apply and reflect on the multiple dimensions of their past and present experiences, identities, and expertise. In Chapter 3, I referred to Kiang's (1992) four dimensions that provide a framework for researchers and teachers to fully understand the Southeast Asian refugee experience. In order for students to describe their experience fully and for educators to fully comprehend the refugee and immigrant student experience, Kiang advocates viewing the immigrant or refugee student as a) Southeast Asian, b) refugee, c) new immigrant, and d) racial minority in the U.S. As educators in CIRCLE we encouraged students to apply similar dimensions to explore issues of personal, historical, community, racial, ethnic, and national identity. Students were supported in developing multiple categories through which to describe, talk about, and understand the "self," while at the same time valuing the importance of the refugee and immigrant community experience, its history, and contemporary concerns. Through their actions, discussions, and reflections students made meaning of their prior

experiences and were able to integrate this meaning with the new information they were gaining in their CSL experiences.

Being exposed to an educational process that explored immigrant/refugee identities, community histories, and cultural identities played a crucial role in how students felt about the course and how they came to identify themselves through their discussions and reflections. Because immigrant and refugee students felt that their voices were heard and understood in this space, I believe they were more willing to reflect critically about their assumptions and ideas of self, community, academic and national identity in new and different ways. Two thirds of the study participants stated that practicing and vocalizing in both individual and group discussions and reflections helped them to gather information and respond to new situations as well as reassess old situations. Students talked about becoming comfortable questioning dominant society and at the same time criticizing aspects of their own community. In short, a community service-learning experience with like ethnic communities provided students with important opportunities to gain greater insight into and new perspectives about their multi-layered identities.

The CIRCLE courses focused on the refugee and immigrant experience not only through class readings and experiential activities and examples (role plays or community mapping) but also through student and community members' stories. Listening or reading other students' and community members' stories affirmed participants' individual and community identities. On one occasion a student shared his story of being an ethnic Chinese growing up in Burma. He described how fellow students in his town called him the yellow chicken because his family was not Burmese, even though they

had lived in Burma for three generations. This story spurred other students in the class to talk about their majority or minority status within their countries of origin and within the United States. As students heard others describe similar stories and struggles, they felt comfortable conveying their feelings and having their identities affirmed through the story telling process. Using student-centered stories as springboards for engaging students in identity discussions proved to be a very useful tool for deeper analysis on refugee and immigrant community development and experience. Below an immigrant student, considered by sociologists as part of the 1.5 generation (foreign-born U.S. resident who arrives at a young age), processed important layers of her identity through her writing:

> I came to the United States at the young and impressionable age of six. My family and I lived in a non-Asian community, which consisted of mostly Hispanics and African Americans. Those were the people I had as friends and schoolmates. As I grew older I assimilated into American society. I was able to learn English very quickly because I was young and I barely knew my own language. I became more immersed into the American culture, so immersed I almost forgot my own. Nobody is perfect right? When I went to this specialized school for business, I saw more Asians but still I didn't interact with any. I was still hanging with my clique and the Asian students didn't seem to like me that much. They used to talk about me behind my back because of whom I hung out with. "Look at her, she thinks she's all that, all she hangs out with is are Hispanics and Blacks". Even though they sometimes spoke in Chinese, I understood them. I was already judged before they met me. Then my friends used to make jokes about the Asian people at school. I'd laugh with them. That didn't make me any better than the Asian students so I asked my friends why did they make fun of the Asian students? Did the jokes include me? They said they didn't because they didn't consider me Asian. Not Asian to them? Did I not have black hair, dark eyes and yellow skin? What made me different from other Asians? Was it because I grew up on MTV, McDonalds and hip-hop and the Asian students grew up on what their Chinese or other Asian cultures taught them? My parents never had the time to teach me anything. They worked all the time. How can my parents and the Asian students blame me for the fact that I am not Chinese enough? What am I? What am I called when I live in America? Am I an Asian-American, dual cultured? I wasn't born in the U.S. but I still get put

> in the Asian-American category. No, I am Asian and I will always be Asian....that is my heritage, that is who I am. (student reflection paper).

Another student reflected on a visit from an ethnic non-profit organization director who spoke to the class and the impression her talk made on him. He wrote,

> I remember when Ms. Nguyen came to class as a guest speaker and talked about her experience in the U.S. Her talk and the work she does organizing her community is very inspiring to me because she understands what it is like being an immigrant and living in the U.S. (student reflection paper).

Introducing students to community leaders and members who could talk about their community work and who came from similar backgrounds allowed students to enter into deeper discussions about their own family, community, and professional/academic identities. Evident in many of these discussions one can note that students understand their identity as embedded in the refugee and immigrant experience.

One of the Five College Campus students from Southeast Asia shared her poem entitled "My Burden" that speaks about Asian parents' expectations of their children and children's sense of obligation and her conflicted desire to fulfill these expectations (see appendix). Later in her reflection paper she wrote:

> I have always known I was expected to go to college and then support my family. Lately, though I have become more and more overwhelmed by my responsibility to one day financially support my parents and relieve them of this burden. About two weeks ago I realized my father had been working two full-time jobs for the past six months and I didn't even know it. I couldn't believe my frail father who has terrible back problems and has had three surgeries already was taking on two full-time jobs. At first I became very angry with my two younger sisters and older brother. I was appalled that they didn't have jobs to help support my parent. I thought to myself, granted they are only in high school but I did when I was in high school. They could at least just work on the weekends and give my dad the money. This situation with my father forces me to finish college as soon as possible and help the family. I have no problems with that, in fact, I can't wait until I can help my family. Unfortunately right now I feel a heavy weight on my shoulders to apply for as many scholarships and

> summer programs as possible to help my chances of getting into a better graduate school. I think as a Hmong woman I have a tremendous obligation to try for things and to feel like I am living up to my parents expectations. Actually it's not even to live up to their expectations but rather to know that I tried everything in my power to better myself so that one day I can actually relieve them of their burden to support me and my siblings. (student reflection paper)

Many students related to stories like the one told above. They were able to affirm their cultural identity by listening to one another, realizing that their sense of family obligation, although at times all encompassing, is more than filial responsibility but rather is directly linked to issues of identity, culture, and social expectations to support one's family. Issues of filial responsibility that are deeply ingrained in students' identity are talked about in similar ways in Trueba and Zou's (1995) analysis of Miao minority students attending a national university in China:

> Education, the acquisition of knowledge, status, and academic skills is the main door to the empowerment of nationalities. Equally important is the hypothesis that Miao minority students pursue an education as a mechanism to become empowered. At the heart of the educational process is the continued motivation to help one's own people, to reciprocate, to pay back debts of sacrifice and support. Miao students see education, in the final analysis, as the culmination of their community's dreams, as the realization of their own dreams and the public recognition of the sacrifices made. How do students adapt to university life? The sources of personal self-worth are places outside and inside the individual. Those outside the individual are placed primarily in the family, peer group, village and ethnic community. Honor is a central collective value. The key motivation of students and intellectuals to achieve was family and community and their sense of obligation and responsibility gives them energy and inspiration to work hard in order to repay the obligations of love and sacrifice. (p. 140)

Experiences as these allowed students to act as savvy bicultural mediators with accumulated life skills when they were working with the community youth. Students applied their skills to mediate mainstream society while at the same time collaborating and interacting with their ethnic communities (Habana-Hafner, 2000). Students wrote at

length about the youth they were working with and the mirror images of themselves that they saw in the youth. They commented on the situations and conditions of the youths' lives and the situations of their families that were so similar to their own experiences. Undergraduate students also expanded on how challenging yet satisfying it was to negotiate with a variety of community stakeholders to develop the youth projects. In addition, students shared their own experiences in the resettlement process as their service experience evolved. Many students cultivated discussions with the youth around the transitions they have gone through as young people before and during college. In other cases students talked about how being young educators in a community setting similar to their own allowed them to develop skills that they didn't believe they had. As one student commented:

> I have always considered myself somewhat of a leader and not a follower but I never truly believed that I could be a good leader. The idea of collective leadership is on that suits my beliefs and personality. I strongly believe in teamwork because as my mother says, 'four hands are better than two'. Growing up in a big family, we all had to help out to keep things going since there was a lot to do. Community work is like being in a large family; everyone must contribute in order to get things done. For example in my CIRCLE youth group, since I lack strong Vietnamese language skills, I needed my peers to help me in that area. I realized that I cannot do everything by myself and that I needed the help of others. Our group can only function effectively if each member is willing to share their strengths and experiences and also be open to listen to others. (student interview)

Another student described how she believes her bicultural insider perspective served the youth she worked with:

> First of all the youths need someone that they can trust. Being from the same culture they can find that trust in me. They know that I am not there to dictate or manipulate them. I am there for a genuine reason, to work with them and hopefully serve as a role model and mentor. Secondly, the youth can identify with me. I have gone through and still am living through much of the issue that they must deal with. They can see that and

> when I talk to them about these issues they know what I am talking about. There is a sense of validity in what I have to say. I am not pretending to understand, I do understand. This makes it easier for the youth to connect to me and trust me. I do believe that it is because of my experiences in being of the same culture that has allowed me to come as far as I have in my relationship with them. (of course some credit has to go to my remarkable charm!) (student journal)

For other students a like-ethnic community service-learning experience conjured up memories of family and their own youth experiences. One student vividly wrote about her personal intergenerational struggles with her parents as a young Asian woman growing up in Texas. She stated that these memories re-surfaced as a result of her close community work with young Vietnamese girls in an ethnic enclave in Springfield. These girls similarly wrestled with the roles and expectations of women in their home culture and the multiple roles of women in the U.S. As part of their community activities, the undergraduate females and the community girls mutually shared some of their stories and discussed the different paths each have taken to reconcile their cross-cultural struggles. Students drew on many of their bicultural refugee and immigrant experiences to engage with the refugee girls in their service-learning experience. This student wrote about her own identity as she reflected on her experiences with the Vietnamese girls:

> My parents were especially strict on me because I was a girl. This is the reason there needs to be a girls group for Vietnamese girls in Springfield. Parents are worried out of their minds when their children go out at night. This is understandable. However the opportunity to socialize with other people, learn about new things, how to speak and interact with other people is a tool that is essential in the real world. When you practice voicing your opinions you become more confident. Having this self-esteem enables you to pursue other goals and to accomplish wonderful things. Mount Holyoke has helped me tremendously in building my confidence and public speaking skills. Through clubs you learn how to be a leader and a good follower- to make changes that you feel will make the status quo unacceptable. Changing the system so that those who come after you will have a better situation. I can see the girls had their own sense of what they want to do what strengths and weakness they believe

> may come about with this group. They are eager to talk and we are eager to listen. They are ones that will make this group strong. They just need a place to vent their frustrations, thoughts and ideas and we can be the soundboard because all of us have gone through varying degrees of being Asian and female. (journal entry)

In another example a Korean-Brazilian undergraduate student in CIRCLE discussed her multiple identities and the complex nature of trying to understand the different worlds she moves in. In fact, most of immigrant and refugee students we worked with in CIRCLE shared similar complex and multi-layered stories. Her description is worth quoting at length:

> During my high school years I did not know if I should consider myself a Brazilian or a Korean. I was disturbed as a child and could not understand why I had different physical characteristics and why Korean food was being served every night at my home. I tried to stay as Brazilian as possible. I had Brazilian friends and ate Brazilian food. I speak Brazilian with my brother and Korean with my parents. It was hard. I didn't want to become to "koreanized" either. Since I never lived in Korea, I never quite understood the people from Korea. I understood Koreans living in Brazil or South America but Koreans from Korea were different. I always thought Korean girls were weird so I didn't hang out with them much. Now that I am older I look at all this differently. I find that I am attached to my Korean friends more and more and it does seem more comfortable since we share some of the same values. When we moved to America at first I thought I had to become Americanized. I so wanted to speak English fluently, be American and have American friends....but it didn't work. I began to withdraw from that world and looked for my Korean and Brazilian worlds again. I realized I could not escape from them or even hide from them...this was my identity set and done or was it? At times it seems too hard to discover myself and identify myself without hesitation or skepticism. Slowly I am trying to figure it out. (student reflection paper)

> My first day at the University of Massachusetts I could not describe it, it was so overwhelming, so many people walking around campus, guys playing Frisbee, girls socializing on the little corner outside their dorms, buses and cars going back and forth, confusion everywhere, now where do I fit in the midst of all of this? Classes like CIRCLE are different. It is about facing important issues that we as foreigners are experiencing. I am also getting to know classmates that voice their opinions and talk about who they are. It seems that we belong together. It's a place where we can speak out. (student journal)

Narratives like these highlight how aware students were of their complex realities. This especially came out when students were encouraged and supported to talk or write about their identity in a safe academic setting. The reflection above represents many of the key ideas laid out in the funds of knowledge construct: that cultural knowledge and community history are relevant and important identity makers as well as resources in community development. They are reflections of local, national, and international history, social conflicts, politics, and economic realities. Funds of knowledge represent the different resource pools and areas of expertise inherent in a community and its individual members. From this student's narrative we understand how her multiple funds of knowledge are deeply connected to her identity and provide important resources to her, her family, her community, and the classroom.

The above student's ability to speak various languages and understand different cultural contexts represents resources of potential. This student and her family are also living examples of global migration from Korea to Brazil to the U.S. Through further storytelling and interviewing one might be able to understand the different areas of expertise that this family has developed by migrating to and living in different countries. Being Brazilian has allowed this student to relate to Latino students while at the same time bringing her face to face with some of the misunderstandings and stereotypes that being a Portuguese-speaking Brazilian-Korea carries. Having grown up as a "minority" in Brazil, she is also able to filter through some of her experiences in the U.S. as well as compare and contrast them. This student is also able to relate to Asian students on campus because of her Korean background accompanied by the many layers her experience brings to these interactions. From this Brazilian-Korean student example,

educators could develop many lessons related to identity. These might include delving into the student's migration experience, the historical reasons for her parents' migration to Brazil, what it is like to be Korean and grow up in Brazil and then contrast that to U.S. immigrant experiences.

In another student reflection paper, we see how a student unwrapped and grappled with aspects of her identity and social history and her desire to connect these experiences with students like herself while working with youth who may benefit from her experiences. In this case the student's desire to act in a community setting simulated her reflection about her identity as a bicultural young person growing up in the United States:

> I remember my pre-college years, my whole life basically, there was not a person for me to talk to about my culture and experiences. When I was growing up, I had a difficult time identifying who I was. There was definitely a cultural and generation gap between me and my parents. I didn't think that they would understand because they were so used to the Chinese culture. My siblings were older than I was so it was difficult to talk to them because they were not always there. I found it difficult to talk to my family. Many of my friends did not talk about it or they did not want to because they were so used to the American culture. I want to help make it easier for students to talk about subjects like this and to know that there are people who they can talk to and who have had some of the same experiences. I also want this to be a new experience for me since I rarely ever get a chance to talk about these things with people like me. (participant interview)

Through sustained peer and mentoring relationships, the students in this study were able to affirm their identities as refugee and immigrant students and community members. Their weekly meetings with the youth provided a natural setting to understand some of the pressing concerns in refugee youths' lives. These issues, in many instances, were very similar to the concerns the undergraduates had had during their middle and high school years or were even dealing with at present:

> Working with Asian youth is a cause near and dear to my heart. I can relate to what all these youths feel and need because I was just like them. At a young age, I found myself in a new country, confused and lost because everything and everyone was so different. I grew up in a white neighborhood, so in the beginning I didn't have friends. After a while I made some friends in school, but I still had a difficult time because of the language and cultural barriers. I had no one I could talk to about issues that concerned me. At that time there were no mentors or older people who served as guidance for a confused youngster like me. Therefore, if I could help even just one youth in any way I would feel content. (student journal)

In the following interview, a student shared her interaction with a group of Vietnamese youth. Her role as mentor with similar ethnic youth communities not only influenced the youth she worked with but also helped solidified her professional identity and goals:

> I am realizing more and more how important it is for young people especially minorities to have teachers that are like them and can understand where they're coming from. Many of the boys have told me that I would make a wonderful teacher and that they wish I could teach them. What a great compliment! It's unfortunate that the majority of the teaching population is all white with very few minority teachers. The guys have told me that they wish there were more Vietnamese teachers in their schools that could relate to them. This makes me even more determined to go into education. (participant interview)

Within our teaching repertoire, we conscientiously incorporated visual images as a way to invite students to think about themselves and their identities. For the students who developed the photography project, many of these exercises helped them in their workshops with the youth on community photography and visual images. In one exercise we asked students to choose a photograph or magazine picture that in some way related to them. We used this activity as an icebreaker and a way to build trust amongst classmates by sharing aspects of their identity. Students working on the Visual Portrayal project modeled this same activity with the youth and included developing a fotonovela

or storyboard using images and art. Below I include an undergraduate's comments on the activity the first time we did it in class:

> Today's agenda included reflections through pictures. To start off, the reflections through pictures was an interesting activity that ignited our thoughts, ideas and feeling. I chose this particular picture of a little girl standing alone on a dusty road that had a quote, "It's a tough road to walk on". The reason I chose this picture was because many times I have felt that I was alone and struggling with the various paths I have to choose. I have a very difficult time thinking about what the future holds for me. There are uncertainties in life, the skepticism and the fear of growing up as an immigrant in this country. The quote was also appealing and it struck me instantaneously and made me think that life is a difficult road, but I'm hoping that it will get better. (journal entry)

This student makes the link of how personally connected we can become to visual images. In fact the photographs we take or are drawn to often reflect, conjure up, or remind us of personal and meaningful events in our lives.

> One student reflects on the photographs in the "Here I am Now!" exhibit as:
>
> A way for the youths we were working with to express something that is meaningful in their life. I was so proud to be a part of this especially after we hung all the pieces up and the youths got to say what each image meant to them. A highlight of this project was showing the youths the possibilities of images. (reflection paper)

Other students talked about "Here I am Now!" as a space where dialogue around identity issues and questions was encouraged:

> A project that brought youth of the same community together to become more active, more open to their thoughts and opinions through photographs. This gave the youth the opportunity to speak out about their culture, values and eventually gave them the chance to know themselves and develop their identity (student interview)
>
> This project was a great experience. I learned more about photography and the youth. Through photography situations can explain themselves on their terms to the viewer. Some of the youth did not want to display their photographs at first because they thought the community would look down on them or understand their signs as meaning they were part of a gang, thus creating rumors. Later the youth realized that this was part of who

> they are, pop culture was a part of their identity and it was ok to take pictures of this. (student interview)

Chalfen (1998) writes that the access to affordable cameras has permitted ordinary people to visually document themselves and their families and construct more complete insider presentations of their lives. The author refers to taking personal photographs as a way that people organize their experience and "as a representation that both reflects and promotes a particular look at life" (p. 230). As refugee and immigrant students and youth experimented with photography, their particular look at life was very much connected to their notions of self and community identity.

In this section I have incorporated a variety of student narratives and excerpts from interviews to portray how student and youth identity was affirmed through a project that focused on acknowledging students' expertise to organize youth from similar ethnic backgrounds. Salient messages emerge about identity when students are engaged in critical pedagogy with peers from similar social, cultural, economic, and racial realities. As students became familiar and comfortable with the structure of such a course and with their classmates, they began to see the connections and reflections of their identities in the course content, their peers' realities, and their community outreach.

For students whose histories and contemporary realities are underrepresented in traditional educational settings, being involved in this kind of alternative academic environment allows for greater exploration and affirmation of diverse student identity. Students' involvement in this series of CSL courses was, for many, the first time they were encouraged to write or talk about themselves and their communities. Moreover, working within an experience that focused on active involvement with refugee and immigrants communities further guided the participants in their exploration and

affirmation of self and community identity. Habana-Hafner (1998) affirms that students from bi- and multi-cultural experiences who are engaged in this type of education learn to negotiate different aspects of their identity:

> through increased awareness and understanding of culture and cross-cultural adaptation, newcomers gain adaptive mechanisms and skills with which to retain and reject tradition. At the same time, they create and synthesize new forms of identity, voice, and space for themselves and their communities. (p.12)

Critical Thought and Social Activism Toward the Empowerment of Self and Community

Taylor (2002) notes that community service-learning offers opportunities for crossing multiple borders: a) physical boundaries between the campus and the community; b) socially constructed and materially enforced borders of race, class and age; and; c) pedagogical and epistemological borders between text and experience as ways of learning and knowing (pp. 52-53). To Taylor's list I would add that community service-learning offers the potential to bridge diverse student and community realities with critical thought and activism for social change. The melding of minority student experiences through service with marginalized community realities holds inherent possibilities for crossing new terrain. In community service-learning, border crossing discussions have primarily focused on white middle-class students entering the worlds of the poor. I suggest that when the tables are turned and diverse communities are brought together with an agenda for change, we begin to extend and cross the boundaries of traditional community service-learning.

As I mentioned in Chapter 2 of this study, Hurtado (2002) focuses on various dimensions that universities need to reconsider if they hope to attract, retain, and

promote minority students of color. Hurtado writes that students from diverse backgrounds,

> need opportunities to interact with others when diversity is an issue because such interactions enable students to work through differing perspectives and discover common values. At the same time students need to interact among themselves to reinforce the development of identity, to revitalize important cultural values and to maintain a comfort zone that buffers them when they encounter culturally insensitive students. (p. 130)

Hurtado (2002) stresses throughout her work the need for educators and university administrations to provide safe spaces of learning for ethnically and racially diverse students. These spaces should encourage critical thinking and social activism that ultimately motivate students to become active participants, partners, and leaders on campus and in the communities where they live and work.

In this section I share several student narratives to illuminate the meaning participants made from their experiences as peers and mentors in similar and familiar communities. Students offered many different examples of how this experience sparked their critical thinking and opened passages for activism. In different ways, students expressed how this alternative learning environment and community enabled them to develop and expand personally, socially, and academically.

One of the key dimensions of the CIRCLE project was the bringing together of immigrant and refugee students and youth from neighboring refugee communities. In Chapter 3 I described the theoretical underpinnings of situated learning theory and its potential for student learning and growth. In this study, students repeatedly spoke about their peer and mentor relationships and the impact these relations had on their learning, their understanding of contemporary and historical immigration issues, their ability to

speak out about different social, cultural and political issues, and their overall sense of belonging, identity and feelings of being part of a group. As one student wrote,

> Going to a university where the population of students of color is very small, I was constantly seeing myself as the "other" and different from everyone else. When I took my first CIRCLE course, I felt as if a mirror were being put up before me to allow me to see things I had never seen before. (student reflection paper)

In the following excerpt, an undergraduate narrated how the common refugee experience of war, cross-cultural interactions and intergenerational family conflict opened important lines of communication with the urban refugee youth she was working with. This student demonstrates her and a fellow undergraduate's ability to interact with youth as effective peer models and mentors. What is more, the undergraduate student alludes to the significance of identity and building like community relations to work toward change within the complex realities of first-generation refugee and immigrant young people. The student wrote,

> Phoung read an article about the killing fields to the youth. This reading prompted a conversation about how much the youth knew about the war. We asked them about how much they knew from their parents. At this point I found myself taking over the discussion. I t began to gẹt personal for me. I did begin to express my emotions through tears. But despite this I was able to begin raising points and ideas that prompted the youths to talk. Before I knew it we began to have a deep discussion about the youths feelings towards their parents. We discussed the problems that they felt about intergenerational conflict. I talked about the conflicts I have gone through and am going through and that I know they are going through. Then the kids spoke like I hadn't imagined they could. Vout said that he wanted to sit down with his mom and ask her about all her experiences. They thought and expressed ideas that were mature and showed they were aware of things I didn't think they were aware of. I had always wanted to lead a personal and thoughtful discussion like this one. I knew that the kids had many personal issues and problems such as parent conflict and cultural differences. For the first time I heard their true voices, their emotions and thoughts. (journal entry)

> A week after this discussion I met most of the youth at the mall. We were having a conversation this time about boys and kissing (not brought on by me!). We were laughing and joking around. I did not feel like their friend. I didn't feel like an elder or a teacher either. I also didn't feel like a stranger. It was a feeling that fell somewhere in between all these roles. Later on that night a friend of mine put all the pieces together for me in simple words. He said that the youths talked to me with respect and liking. He said it seemed that they spoke to me as if I was a role model. I don't know if this is right. But if it is it would give me the greatest satisfaction of my life. It is a reward that I would replace any A or academic credit with. (journal entry)

Here another student wrote about what working in a service-learning peer group has meant to him:

> Working in a group has helped me to learn the meaning of cooperation. With the multitude of people attending this university, everyone tends to do their own thing. I feel, we as students, hardly ever take time to work with one another. I remember working in our group when we were doing a skit in class. We couldn't decide on what we were going to do because everyone had different ideas. No one was really leading. Finally we came up with something even though each of us still needs to take a more active role in making decisions. I learned that communication is very important when working in a group. Whether it is sharing my thoughts in a feedback session or to just let people know what time we have to meet. I am learning how to interact with each member of my group through our different experiences. (interview)

In Chapter 3, I referred to Bandura's (1986) belief that effective mentors are individuals who demonstrate efficacy in their role as a model who shares *similar* traits with the learner. According to situated learning theorists, learning is augmented by the quality of the relationship between the learner and the model. Bandura (1986) states that quality peer "relationships serve as vehicles for personal changes" (p. 34). Lave and Wenger (1991) further suggest that learning may be quite effective even among near peers interacting as models for one another. The following journal entries describe students' relationships with their mentors, peers, and the youth. Situated learning theory supports the value and importance of learning in a group situation through the guidance

of similar and familiar mentors or peer models. Through these relationships the students came to understand the potential of their collective community work:

> In class I have the chance to get to know a lot of people and really get to know them. Not just their names or that he or she is always sitting in the back of the class. I think that one of the reasons why I enjoy going to class as much as I do, seeing everybody and knowing how they are. Hell, I even like my teachers and TAs, I feel extremely comfortable with them. It's kind of strange because I could never or never really wanted to talk to my teachers but my teachers are like friends to me. We even go with the graduate student TAs to meet the community youth while our student teams become familiar with the work. So many of us get what it means to be young immigrants in the States and this seems to be a great way we can do meaningful community work. Each of us has something to offer and we can learn from and support each other while we work with the youth. (student journal entry)

> I've been working with a Korean ESL student. It's easy to relate to him because I was a Korean/Brazilian ESL student too. I tried to use my experience to our advantage. I also liked discussing my interactions with the student to my group. This feedback helped me understand what working with a group is all about, how to we can do outreach with the youth and how we can reflect on our work as a group or in our journal. All of these experiences are helping me to find my identity in the community and to understand what kind of person I am and how I can better work in the community. (student reflection paper)

Through classroom and small group discussions, peers not only got to know one another but also learned more about themselves through these relationships and interactions. Below a student's reflection describes her process of personal change by finding her voice, a voice grounded in her experiences as a Chinese-American. Her reflection captures Banura's notion of personal change through peer learning. It also embodies a critical thinking process where experience is the foundation to analyze, question, and critique a particular situation. The process of inquiry or problematization, action, and reflection guides this student to understand that her voice is resonant and powerful. The student described how she was able to become an actor in shaping her

university and community experience through a combination of alternative teaching methods, course design (peer/mentor through service), and most importantly academic content and service experience that sprang from and reflected the learner's life. She wrote,

> Sometimes I feel like I am in between both cultures and I feel like I have to choose between the two. In Boston the schools I attended were so diverse but when we moved to Peabody the majority of the students were Caucasian. I missed being with my friends. We used to speak in English and Chinese. Sometimes I feel like I am losing my native language because I do not speak it much unless I am with my mom. I don't want to forget how to speak Chinese so when I am around my Asian friends I prefer to speak Chinese. When I came to college, I wanted to meet more Asian people so that I would speak Chinese more again. That might be an odd reason but that is how I feel. I am glad that I understand and live in both cultures. I am glad that there is a space at college where I can talk about this too (reflection paper)

> In this class I have learned that I have a voice. This voice is not soft, weak or powerless. Rather it is loud, strong and powerful. I've always had a problem with expressing myself in the classroom. It was always the voices of the others in the classroom that represented the ideas and expressions of the class. Thus the silent voices, such as mine, were left unheard. I learned to stay silent. In a way my shyness to speak evolved into a belief that what I had to say was not important. I became used to not speaking so that I began to believe that I truly didn't have anything to say. In this class my urge to speak and voice myself was awakened. The issues that we discuss in class beg to have responses because they revolve around my experience. I found myself unable to allow the discussions to go by me without acknowledging the issues. I found that I had so many opinions and reactions to the ideas presented in class. To my own surprise I found myself speaking up in almost every class. Not only that but I felt comfortable doing so. I had a sense that the people were truly listening to my ideas and processing them in their minds. They seemed to respect what I had to say and find value in my words. (reflection paper)

The CSL courses in CIRCLE were structured around modeling activities and building skills through hands on and culturally relevant experiential activities. Students learned that grassroots community development skills focus on listening to the community and becoming facilitators, not experts, in a community process. To learn

these skills, the course instructors modeled community development practice in the classroom. It was important that participants experience what it felt like to be listened to, to have people interested in who you are, and curious about your interests and what concerns you. Here I present different reflections that describe participants' critical thinking capacities that I believe guided their community work and ultimately had an impact on their organizing and activism:

> During the first classes, we had to talk about ourselves. At first I was befuddled. I had to explain many things about myself that I never had to do in any other class so it was difficult. I never really had to think about what I had to say about myself. I was surprised to find new things about myself. During one session, we did an activity where we began to look at our identities and where we see ourselves in society. Now that I think about it I didn't really know how to place myself. I guess I am still finding out who I am. (student reflection paper)

> My first impression of this class was "I am not learning anything". I thought the work we do in class was not rigorous. I tried to think how we were going to learn from all these discussions and group activities and not from textbooks or formal lectures. After a few classes I discovered what we learn in class is useful in the real world. Also students and teachers are both facilitators in classroom discussions and in the decision making which is very different from other classes. In most classes teachers give lectures and assignments to do, expecting students to understand by just reading a book. Now when I look back on some of those classes I can't remember a thing. (student journal entry)

> This is not like all other traditional, lecture-style classes. Instead of standing in front of the class and lecturing for two hours, the instructors use and innovative style of teaching. The class is more like a workshop. We had learned methods like action/relfection, role- playing and various skill building exercises using not just word but picture and body language. All the skills we learn in class are adapted to be used when working with the youth. In many of our meetings we simulate what we did in class. Some of the activities are flexible so that we can improvise and alter them to our needs. Also having done the activities ourselves in class we have an idea of what the youth might enjoy or not. (student interview)

Students in their respective community service settings looked collectively at the problems they were facing in their project. As a team, the students would initiate a

process of inquiry, seek ways to solve the problems they encountered, and finally initiate and work through their problems. For all of the students, the process of problematizing and problem solving in refugee youth communities had a significant impact. The students I worked with referred to this way of learning and experiencing university life as important to them in distinct ways. Some students described building their confidence to work in teams or facilitate a meeting. Others wrote about how working in CIRCLE helped them focus on future career options. A considerable portion of the participants discussed how this alternative CSL work conjured up profound ideas about their identity and their conceptions of the immigrant/ refugee experience. Other students spoke about how collective action can lead to change. Below a student, from similar ethnic communities as the youth, reflected on this process:

> Working in a group was one of the ways we learned. Each member of the group had an important role, leaders and followers. This was one of the best experiences of the class but it was also difficult. We had to deal with a lot of obstacles and problems like our own disorganization, attendance, miscommunication and our project goals. Finally we decided to take the Cambodian youth on a trip to D.C. to a conference. We decided to have a bake sale and make a book, a book called "Cambodian Traditional Games". It was great! Every member of the youth and our group was excited about doing the work. The youth interviewed their parents and elders to be able to get a list of games and how to play them. Together we decided which games we would put into the book. We all put the masterpiece together. We were so amazed with our work and the feeling of success. We sold all the books at the Cambodian New Year Festival and made about $199! I enjoyed seeing the youth smile with pride. It really was great teamwork. (student journal)

Another student connected her experience with CIRCLE in to this very reflective way:

> The introspection and reflection of ourselves with respect to and in spite of things around us, transform these passions into activism, with words and service. It is such activism, guided by our passions, that makes us eloquent. (refection paper)

Some students were active in other on-campus organizing capacities but looked to CIRCLE for personal and political support. In this narrative a student asked how CIRCLE could connect its immigrant/refugee work with emerging social justice issues across the area college campuses. Such questioning reveals that for some students CIRCLE represented a safe and politically compatible learning community. As members of this community, they felt comfortable asking how CIRCLE might get involved in the other arenas of struggle they were involved in:

> I started to wonder how CIRCLE could help in situations where we are organizing around important events like racism on one of the 5-college campuses. To be more specific I was thinking about how CIRCLE members can help each other during times of need on our own campuses? How do we see ourselves? As activists or as organizers? Are these two different things or can they not be separated? In addition to this I hope we can have some time to discuss experiences of racism on college campuses and how our institutions react.

Again, the model we developed in CIRCLE promoted multiple forums for action, action in the classroom, in the community and in students' personal choices and actions as a result of their involvement and reflection. Here an undergraduate student from Cambodia, talked about the complexities and the benefits of working with youth from the same ethnic community:

> I have learned that my culture is a part of me. It is something that is valuable in being a leader to the Cambodian youth. I shouldn't take it for granted and I should use it to my advantage. To be honest in the beginning I did not want to work with the Cambodian youth at all. There were two reasons for this. First of all I wanted to experience a different group of people. I wanted to learn about a variety of people and be exposed to their ways and views. Secondly I was afraid of what the parents of the youths might say about me working with their children. In my community adults tend to think it is being nosy and butting in when one talks to their children about their lives. They do not like personal matters to be discussed outside the home. Now I am glad that I have ended up working with the Cambodian youth. I still have all the fears that I mentioned above but I know that being with the Cambodian youth is the best place for me.

> It is the place where I can have the most influence, be a role model and learn. I think it is good for them too that someone from their culture is working with them. (participant interview)

This is an important example of critical and service-learning pedagogy merging, a pedagogy that supports the perspectives, experiences, and knowledge of the learners through action in communities. As such, this pedagogy espouses an array of principles, philosophies, theories and ideologies but does not adhere to any one set of guidelines or pre-packaged curriculum. For refugee and immigrant university students and the university's refugee neighbors, such practice represented a revolutionary educational model that Deans (1999) calls "service-learning projects that pair critical consciousness aims with social action, [as a] fitting manifestation of Freire's theory in practice" (p.22).

Students reacted to the courses and their service experiences in different ways. Some students felt immediately at home working with the youth in the community setting. Others sensed an initial distance from the realities of the recently arrived refugee youth as some undergraduate immigrant/refugee students had come to the U.S. at a very young age. At the beginning of the service experience, some students questioned their own outreach abilities, their limited knowledge of their home language, and their unfamiliarity with particular cultural nuances. Other students connected more readily with the adults in the community organizations or with the youth coordinators. No matter the situation, students were encouraged to reflect on their community service-learning experiences through their own refugee or immigrant lens. The process of reflection through narrative offers many examples of how students understood their experiences. These narratives were also spaces and ways for students to recollect the funds of knowledge that enhanced their work. Moreover, through reflection students

were able to contemplate and comprehend the influence they had on the youth and how in turn their service experience influenced them. Examples include:

> Some of us are more hesitant to talk in a formal group setting. Part of this I think is because I, for example, am self-conscious about my Vietnamese. Others are better public speakers than I am. I don't like to talk in situations where it is more like a presentation format. I am a more the behind the scenes type of leader and I am totally fine with that role. Although language barriers posed some obstacles they were not all together impossible to overcome. We were able to communicate in both languages (Vietnamese and English) so that both groups were able to understand one another. (collective group paper)

> I increasingly became interested in working with fellow Asian immigrants. This is a cause near and dear to my heart. I can relate to what all these youths feel and need because I was just like them. At a very young age, I found myself in a new country confused and lost because everything and everyone was so different. I grew up in an all-white neighborhood, so in the beginning I didn't have any friends. After a while, I made some friends in school, but I still had a difficult time because of the language and cultural barriers. I had no one with whom I could talk to about issues that concerned me. At that time there were no mentors or older people who served as guidance for a confused youngster like me. Therefore, if I could help even just one youth in any way, I would feel content. (student reflection paper)

> I learned that there is so much that needs to be done to lift ourselves and our communities out of chaos that is contemporary American life....I found that I had a role in my community to be a leader (student interview)

> CIRCLE instilled important community organizing skills in me that will help me reconnect with my Hmong culture. In CIRCLE we are encouraged to constantly reflect and evaluate ourselves and the communities we work with, our experiences and the work we have yet to do (student interview)

> Even though we don't always have time to discuss all the logistical stuff related to our projects, I really appreciate us having time to share and connect with each other because that is the main reason why I am committed to CIRCLE-because it cares about ME! (journal entry)

Through their involvement with CIRCLE, various students in the study mentioned the impact the project had on their academic, professional, and personal lives.

Here a student wrote about her community service-learning experience and its application to her academic work:

> CIRCLE has given me ideas as how to apply my knowledge of Women's Studies to the real world. I was very interested and ready to see how my liberal arts education linked to the world of work. Now I see how my academics pertain to real life through this community service experience. The field of Women's Studies is primarily about getting an alternative narrative and focusing on the empowerment of the oppressed and marginal. CIRCLE community work is also about alternative narratives and empowerment because immigrants and refugees are voicing their needs and taking an active role in shaping what they want. As a result of working in CIRCLE new career interests have developed: I am thinking about pursuing a career in community development. I feel my liberal arts background can be best utilized helping new and under-resourced communities. (student reflection paper)

Another undergraduate in her final year of university wrote about some of her personal changes as a result of being a peer model in a community service-learning relationship:

> My work in and with the community youth and with my undergraduate peers has helped me as a graduating senior. In my interviews with service organizations and graduate schools, I am able to passionately speak about my hands on work in the community and as a mentor. For recruiters, I believe this aspect of my work at college enhances my candidacy. I am able to work in cross-cultural settings dealing with real problems and using my cultural understanding of the issues. Because of my work with the Student Advisory Council in CIRCLE, I am able to enter interviews and meetings with an air of confidence in my identity as a woman of color, a community activist and a leader.

In this section I have offered further examples of how students made meaning of their experience in CIRCLE. Participants pointed out that applying critical thinking and social activism or action throughout the course had an influence on their academic, personal, and profession selves. In their reflections and interviews students discussed the many things they learned through these experiences, including learning about group dynamics, how groups develop, how community develop projects evolve and the complexity of getting them off the ground, and the importance of communication and

organization, they came to understand the power of collective work and they witnessed the political and social strength a group can wield (photography exhibit, community speak out, student run conferences, news letter, etc.).

Students also recognized the positive influence that working with their peers had on them. They understood the impact they could have on the youth as they refined their skills in community organizing, training, and outreach. As students refined critical thinking skills and social activism ideals, they were able to encourage youth to talk about their schools, their neighborhoods, and their families in ways that went beyond just simple description. Taking elements we had discussed in class, students infused topics like welfare reform, racial inequality, urban poverty, and bicultural identities, to name a few, into their meetings with the youth. At times the youth weren't interested in talking but other times youth understood exactly what the undergraduates were talking about and participated. For example, one undergraduate student, a Cambodian psychology major, described her conversations with the youth regarding the complex notions of gang affiliation and its relation to urban poverty and group identity. The youth immediately entered this conversation bringing in examples of how misunderstood gangs are by mainstream society. They complained that just because a group of Cambodian kids hang out at one of the housing projects does not mean that they are violent gang members. When topics were brought up that centered on youth issues, the refugee youth often talked about the situation on their terms.

Students affirmed and positively evaluated their critical thought and activism as an offshoot of their service-learning experience. I believe building peer relationships between refugee youth and fellow undergraduate students was one of the most

significant aspects of CIRCLE. In their interviews, in their writing, on video clips, and even on the campus radio show students participated in, participants repeatedly returned to the notion of their group/team work, the friendships they forged by working together, and their collective potential to create change. In their groups, students believed that individual voices became stronger and more critical. Students relied on the strengths of different members, those who were more fluent in one of the languages, students who could draw or take photographs, those who could capture the group's attention etc. Students also recognized the impact their collective work had on the youth. Students spoke openly about how they had learned from one another. They talked about learning in ways they had never learned before because this was their first time working with like peers on community change projects in refugee communities that reflected their own racial, ethnic and cultural selves.

Recognizing Students' Creative and Artistic Potential for Social Change

An aspect of this study that I have become more and more interested in and passionate about revolves around the possibilities of creativity and the arts for higher education and community organizing. My participation in the CIRCLE project and my subsequent analysis for this study have shown me that the arts and specifically photography as art can make abstract concepts more concrete, personalize abstractions, and affect attitudes by involving emotional as well as intellectual responses to social situations. A recurring theme in participants' interviews and reflective writing centered on students coming to terms with their own and the youths' potential to engage in

artistic exploration for social change. Here two students described the artistic potential within the youth and themselves:

> Our project was a collaboration of visual works portraying the self. We (the undergrads and youth) worked very well together and looked for the best ways to describe our hopes. The final product was most beautiful because it was its own creation. It was uncontainable. That is how Art is. Voices were heard through a medium other than words. (student reflection paper)

> This project brought student and youth from the same communities to work together to open our thoughts and opinions through photographs and give the youth an opportunity to speak out about their culture, values in a different way…it was also a creative way for youth to get to know themselves and explore their identity. (student interview)

Here I offer examples of how images are capable of making abstract concepts more concrete for students and community members. Through the photographs students and youth took they were able to engage in sophisticated discussions about, as example, urban poverty in refugee communities. Although the photographs youth took highlighted their friends, family, and neighbors in their homes, walking to the store, playing in the parks, these images also spoke clearly about the lack of resources in newcomer neighborhoods. When students were asked to discuss the neighborhoods they worked in through their or the youths' photographs, many addressed the poor housing conditions, the lack of clean public leisure space, and the condition of public schools. These conversations led to deeper discussions about institutionalized systems of poverty in the U.S. and how refugee and immigrant communities were often ghettoized into specific urban enclaves because of social and economic class issues. In their reflection sessions, students referred back to the photographs as personalized examples of abstract concepts such as poverty and segregation.

At the same time the youths' photography offered powerful ways to affect community and university attitudes about newcomer communities. In the guest book at the first exhibit on campus a visitor wrote:

> This exhibit was a profound statement by young people living in the U.S while straddling multiple worlds. The students' and youths' presentations have challenged my own stereotypes of the refugee and immigrant young person and student. Thank you for making me think and feel outside of the box!

Images are capable of shifting opinions, changing tastes, invoking desire, appealing to the aesthetic, and bringing about change. Marketing and advertising experts study and apply this mantra daily. Social photographers like Jacob Riis, Lewis Hine and Dorothea Lange used visual images to stimulate public opinion around historical social issues like immigration, the depression, the dust bowl era, the plight of farm workers, or the situation of child laborers.

The use of photography and visual images in academic research is finding ground within traditional humanities and social science disciplines. Harper (1998) writes that,

> images allow us to make statements which can not be made by words, and the world we see is saturated with sociological meaning. Thus it does not seem peculiar to suggest that images enlarge our consciousness and the possibilities for sociology. Oddly we remain revolutionaries in an enormously conservative discipline. But while our colleagues continue to resist such an attractive, useful, interesting and engaging proposition, visual sociologists have continued to do research, publish in our own journal, *Visual Sociology*, hold international conferences and continually redefine ourselves and our research in the process. (p. 38)

Prosser (1998) states that although there have been creative and innovative research projects that use photography and image-based research like Worth and Adair's (1972)

participatory photography ethnography, Through Navajo Eyes, these studies have not had,

> the impact one would have accepted. The sum of these works in terms of their influence on mainstream disciplines is disappointing, suggesting that although key methodological models have been devised and major personalities have played a role in potentially enhancing the status of image-based research other more significant forces have been in place which have undercut their endeavors. (p. 101)

Prosser (1998) attributes some of this resistance to historical circumstances. Late nineteenth and early twentieth century armchair anthropology and travel sociology had readily employed photography and were criticized by researchers from institutions like the Chicago School as being muckrakers who objectified and orientalized their subjects. According to Prosser (1998), the shift to fieldwork grounded in participant observation and ethnographic methods replaced photography as a "prime source of data" after the 1920's (p. 100).

The expanding field of visual anthropology, however, has focused on recognizing, incorporating, and analyzing the visual in order to better comprehend how culture or segments of society represent themselves. Authors in this field argue that an understanding of the nature of representational and visual processes across cultures is essential (Collier & Collier, 1997). Currently visual anthropology is engaged in a series of transformations, which involve making links with other disciplines and testing how the field might be more closely integrated with mainstream anthropology and as well as areas outside academia (Pink, 2001).

In the field of narrative analysis, there has been an embracing view of visual and image-based research. Clandinin and Connelly (2000) consider visual narratives like photography as "key documents in the context of narrative inquiry" and as "artifacts

collected in our lives, that provide a rich source of memories" (p. 114). Yet there continues to be a debate around photography as art or as science. The debate centers on photography's ability to capture and reproduce reality. The scientific view sees photography as a way to objectively display an image of something in real life. Artists, on the other hand, tend to see photography as a subjective expression of how the photographer sees the world. Artistic vision reflects a series of decisions by the photographer that are informed by aesthetic, social, and political influences.

As the participants in this study learned more about photography and visited galleries and exhibits over the course of this project, they too recognized the many different facets of photography, the practical, artistic, functional, representational, and emotional. For example, students talked about the role photography plays in maintaining records, in preserving cultural heritage, in learning for medical purposes, in expressing feelings and emotions, for keeping a diary of special occasions, and for archiving historical events. Photography also offers students a space for creativity and excitement to catch and freeze a moment in their lives, learn about light and angles, and discover the power of a scene, a smile, or a movement. Photography is a personal and creative expression. Students can reproduce moments in their individual or community lives to share with their parents, fellow community members, university administrations, faculty, and others how they see and depict their world. As an educational and artistic endeavor, photography has the potential to affirm participants' cultural expertise and funds of knowledge about their communities.

In the interviews I conducted with study participants, I used Harper's (1987) reflective photography or photo elicitation approach. During these interviews I showed

the 10 interviewees photographs from the "Here I am Now!" exhibit. Sometimes I only asked them to comment on one photograph and in other interviews I include various photographs from the exhibit. This approach derives from a process used by some visual sociologists to elicit a deeper discussion based on the interviewee's understanding of this photograph including their relationship to the images depicted therein. In my interviews, students discussed the exhibit photographs in detail, what each represented to them, who/what the subject was and why this subject was important to the youth or the students etc. Looking at the photographs also helped them remember the community organizing process. The photographs reminded students about how they had applied many different educational and community development techniques and strategies to bring the youth together and coordinate the project. They recalled the many meetings it took to get the youth to think about photographing their neighborhoods and families and about the many discussions that took place to decide how they were going to choose their photographs for the final exhibit. The photographs elicited a variety of different stories, stories about the youth and their families, stories about the students' team or peer group, stories about the activities they had organized and stories about themselves as refugee and immigrant students working with like ethnic community youth.

There are strong implications for classroom learning and community activism when visual narratives and imagery are used. The Center for Creative Photography at the University of Arizona supports educators interested in incorporating photography into interdisciplinary curricula modules. The *Indivisible* (2000), a traveling photography exhibit developed in partnership with the Center and the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University focuses on the power of documentary tradition, images and

personal narrative in twelve communities across the United States. The purpose of the exhibit and accompanying teacher education guide is to reveal aspects of identity, community, and civic engagement of the people in these different community settings. Jeffers (2000) affirms that by expanding teachers and students beliefs about art they come to understand "art as a critique of culture that both comments on and connects with life in the real world" (p. 111).

Recently I learned about the public health work of Wang and Burris (1994) who developed a method of participatory photography they have titled Photovoice. I believe this approach mirrors the process of the "Here I am Now!" exhibit and Visual Portrayal project because of its focus on participants' creation of their images having an impact on social change. Wang and Burris (1994) believe that community people ought to create their own images and texts to develop relevant and community appropriate public health policy. Furthermore, Wang and Burris (1994) believe that images teach and can influence policy making. The Photovoice methodology has its theoretical underpinnings in health promotion relating to community organization and communication. It also relies on the literature focused on education for critical consciousness, feminist theory, and a grassroots approach to documentary photography. Photovoice embraces a philosophy that,

> does not entrust cameras to health specialists, policymakers, or professional photographers, but puts them in the hands of children, rural women, grassroots workers, and other constituents with little access to those who make decisions over their lives. Promoting what Brazilian educator Paulo Freire has termed "education for critical consciousness," photovoice allows people to document and discuss their life conditions as they seem them. The process of empowerment education also enables community members with little money, power, or status to communicate to policymakers where change must occur. (1994, p. 171)

In a later article, Wang and Burris (1997) define Photovoice as a process,

> by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique. As a practice based in the production of knowledge, photovoice has three main goals: (1) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns; (2) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs; and (3) to reach policymakers. Applying photovoice to public health promotion, a health promotion strategy in which people use cameras to document their health and work realities. As participants engage in a group process of critical reflection, they may advocate change in their communities by using the power of their images and stories to communicate with policy makers. In public health initiatives from China to California, community people have used photovoice to carry out participatory needs assessment, conduct participatory evaluation, and reach policy makers to improve community health.

In the field of psychology much has been written about the power of pictures and imagery. Paivo (1971) explains that knowledge is stored in permanent memory as images referred to as imagens. These imagens are "not merely mental pictures rather they are composed of mental images, smells, tastes, sounds and kinesthetic sensations" and "images are absolutely necessary for understanding" the world around us (cited in Ewy, 2003). Social documentary filmmakers understand these concepts and involve their viewers in dialogues about social change. In a sense these filmmakers are using images as a kind of popular education technique. Ramos (1999) in her study with elderly Latina women engaged the participants in conversations through black and white drawings of people in socially and culturally familiar settings (*fotodiálogo*). The conversations that emerged from these women's reflections offered detailed insights into these women's experiences of family, immigration, health concerns, etc. Such projects and studies provide further support that integrating visual images into the educational

experiences of racial and ethnically diverse students offer exciting possibilities for educational change and student empowerment.

Over the two-year period that I worked with the 10 study participants, visual narratives and artistic expression played an important role in our classroom and community work. It served as an alternative to the written text, to the standard and prescribed notion that learning is about reading, writing and repeating only. For example, we challenged such standardization by turning routine classroom introductions into simple art activities. We would ask people to draw a symbol or a picture that represents their name on an index card and then have them explain their name through their drawing. This breaks away from the hackneyed and often tuned out responses that students give when they introduce themselves at the beginning of the semester. It was amazing to note how many students' remembered each other names based on each of their introductory drawings. Making visual representation a learning vehicle sets a tone. It can focus people and make them think in new ways. Applying art in this fashion can connect a group in ways that just going around the room stating your name can't. A student commented:

> Creative representations help us to learn in different ways. The introduction game is an example of this: draw a picture or symbol that would indicate to the rest of the class who you are. Through my specific symbol of a Coptic cross and my family I am indicating to the rest of the class that my identity is bound up in my religion, my culture and my family, these are the most important things in my life and they are all represented in my name. (student interview)

On many occasions the facilitators in CIRCLE created a variety of opportunities for students to explore concepts related to the refugee and immigrant experience through art. These included drawing murals on butcher block, making collages, describing a

photograph, making masks, using symbols and graphics to explain concepts like insider/outsider perspectives, taking Polaroid pictures and developing a story board and so on. Using these techniques allowed students to think about abstract information and concepts we were discussing in concrete ways. By drawing a two-sided mask on paper plates students were asked to represent at least two aspects of their immigrant/refugee youth identity. This gave students a chance to not only speak about their own experiences through their art but provided them with an expressive way to reflect back to what it was like being in middle school. This media offered students a creative place to recollect and talk about their youth experiences. Another technique we often used involved students selecting a photograph from a pile to discuss a particular topic. Here a student described the picture she chose to describe the resettlement process:

> The pictures people in the class chose to describe the resettlement process were really interesting and everyone attached meaning to the pictures, often relating the picture to their experiences as immigrants coming to this country. I chose a man with a huge smile on his face. I talked about how a smile is contagious and how I love to see people happy. I also mentioned that although resettling to a new place is scary and confusing a lot of times people have found great happiness in their new homes…they have been reunited with people they haven't seen in years and they begin to feel secure.

Unfortunately, visual narratives, art, and creative expression are infrequently curricular components of the college classroom. The Visual Portrayal/"Here I am Now!" project broke with this tradition. This project was a participatory photography endeavor where undergraduates trained the community youth in the aesthetics, mechanics, and expressive subtleties of photography. Later students and youth applied their photography to learn from one another, to learn about their identities and then teach others about themselves and about their communities. One student stated,

> Getting the Vietnamese and Cambodian youth to come together to work on a common goal has been a great project. Youth have been able to describe themselves by taking pictures and using the pictures they have taken to show others about their identity. (student journal)

> The photography project got students and youth to share their experiences in the U.S. with a broader audience. It gave the youth an opportunity to express themselves in an artistic way because many are not native English speakers so expressing themselves orally or in written text can be overwhelming and restrictive. Using art allows them to share their experiences without the limitations of words. Through these pictures we were able to understand youths in-depth insights about how they see themselves and how they see their teachers treating them for example. Their pictures also reflected how much they appreciate their parents even if they aren't able to show them. (student interview)

Students became interested in how art generated by everyday individuals can challenge the notions that only Western paintings and sculptures embody high art, art that is worthy of being exhibited in museums. Community art, student art or indigenous art, on the other hand, is often viewed by much of society as a craft, unschooled, a popular public expression but not classifiable as high art. Students spoke about this distinction in their interviews, as one student noted:

> The exhibit was a way for the youth we were working with to express things that are meaningful in their lives. I was so proud to be a part of this collaboration, especially after we hung all the pieces up and the youth got to say what each image meant to them. I feel in a way like this was a historic moment. Urban refuge youth as artists, in a university gallery telling the world who they are and what they want through their own images.

Jeffers (2000) writes that teachers and students can come to understand "artists and viewers as activists and co-creators of meaning and knowing and learning as contextual processes made possible through engagement, discourse and community" (p. 111). In other words, Jeffers calls on educators to embrace art and incorporate artistic expression into their teaching. Jeffers goes beyond advocating for developing an

appreciation for art and encourages educators to engage students as activists and creators of meaning through art. Techniques may include stories and poetry, graphic arts, sculpture, drama, song, and dance or photography. Teachers do not need to be artists themselves but need to think about setting up engaging and meaningful education experiences that will provide students with ways to develop, learn from, and share their creations.

In the "Here I am Now!" exhibit it was evident that students and youth recognized and felt good about their creative and artistic potential. In fact students were excited to learn more about how their photography could impact social issues like welfare and immigration reform that were affecting their communities. They discussed different venues, conferences, and events where they could exhibit their photographs. Students became passionate about showing the photography to get more people to shift and change their attitudes or open up their thinking about immigrants and refugees. This study, I believe, provides important examples of how the creative and artistic capacities of learners can become valuable resources not only in our classrooms but in students' community service-learning experiences that strive for social change. I close this section with an excerpt from a participant interview, a student who saw this potential very clearly:

> To showcase yourself, your friends, history and other things that you identify with is a form of activism. Identity is something we are continuously working to define. For the youth to want to take that step no matter what expectations we held, they produced a fine work of artistic expression that could not be contained. They had firm stances about their definitions of identity which when we look back on this we will see it as the strong point of this exhibit. No matter how much we as the undergrads talked about identity and no matter how hard we tried to keep their views focused on our ideas, their views and forms of portrayal came out stronger and more accurate…it was through their eyes. This wasn't a project to

"help" anyone or define things for anyone; it was about seeing, really seeing the point of view of the photographer, the artist-not anyone else's (student interview)

Summary

In this chapter I presented four recurring themes that explain how ten refugee and immigrant undergraduate students' understood their experiences and interactions in a series of community service-learning courses with similar ethnic communities. These themes emerged as a result of my intimate reading and re-reading of the data that I had collected as part of two CIRCLE projects in 1996-1998. The themes I developed in this chapter are supported by student interviews, writing and my own field notes as well as the theoretical framework that I present in Chapters 3 and 4. Through the explanatory power of this framework and the themes that emerged from the data, I believe I have been able to answer the research questions I asked at the beginning of this dissertation. In this chapter the themes reflected how immigrant and refugee students understood their participation in this project. When students learned and acted in a space that supported them as immigrants and refugees, encouraged them to work in peer groups with like ethnic communities, and stressed the importance of student and community knowledge and expertise, they understood that,

- resisting and challenging the status quo, be it at the university or within other institutions can have an impact on their lives;
- their identities are confirmed and affirmed;
- by turning to critical thought or social activism they could empower themselves and their communities; and

- in recognizing and developing their creative and artistic potential they were capable of social change.

In the subsequent and final chapter of this dissertation I will present my overall conclusions as well as implications for further research and institutional practice.

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Journey Taken and Lessons Learned

In this dissertation I have tried to scaffold a variety of themes and ideas that help explain how immigrant and refugee undergraduate students understood their experiences of participating in an alternative community service-learning project at a public state university. This project revolved around students and youth developing a participatory photography initiative that culminated in the "Here I am Now!" exhibit at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. To understand the meaning students made of their participation in such an endeavor, I first asked a few research questions, reviewed the scholarly work that supports these questions, and then through the lens of three theories and qualitative approaches, I analyzed the data I collected. These data included the narratives (visual and written) by and interviews with the study participants and my own observations and field notes. As I come to the end of this research journey I ask myself if I have successfully answered my questions so that this research may be useful to educators, university administrators, the field of education, and in particular to community service-learning.

My hope is that this study, in some way, will impact the educational lives of the growing number of immigrant and refugee students on campuses today. I believe the questions I ask in this study are relevant, given the significant demographic changes we are seeing at our universities. I also believe that, in light of the nation's reflection on 50 years after the Brown vs. Board of Education decision, it is critical that we listen to the

newest voices of the under-represented and racially and ethnically diverse students in higher education. As Allen and Niss (1990) found in their survey focused on the attitudes of university faculty, foreign-born students are the "most forgotten students on campus" with African-American women as "runners up for this dubious honor" (cited in Fox, 1994, p. 184). This chapter summarizes the major findings that explain how immigrant and refugee students viewed and shaped the meaning of a particular higher education experience. Implications for further research and institutional practice are also outlined.

In the first section, I set the stage for my research questions. I reviewed what the relationship between U.S. universities and racially, ethnically and culturally diverse students has been like historically. I then looked at the present debates surrounding these associations. In reviewing the literature, I found that university and diverse student relationships have gone through multiple phases; from ones that barely existed based on a history of racist exclusion to ones that are struggling to re-name and reconfigure themselves through the political achievements of the civil rights and other social justice movements. As with all histories, it seemed important to view the evolution and strides made by members of common communities such as native-born and foreign-born students of color on U.S. campuses. My review showed that the struggles of native-born minority communities have paved important paths in changing exclusionary university dynamics. With heightened immigration from Latin American, Asia, and Africa, new dimensions of diversity embody student and faculty experiences on our campuses. As a result, public institutions like the state university are faced with additional opportunities

and challenges as to how they will move with the changing times and shifting demographic tide.

Authors like Tifonas (2003), Kiang (2000), Cheng (2000), Hurtado (1998), Feagin (1996), and Trueba (1994), amongst others, remind us that many facets of the university are still in need of reform to justly incorporate today's changing university populations. These authors point to various arenas (curricular, institutional, faculty hiring, pedagogic, diversity-related initiatives, and diverse student interactions and exchanges) that require consistent and thoughtful restructuring in order to shift the Euro-centric pillars that continue to be the central frames of reference and knowledge in much of university life. For these reasons, I blended two qualitative research approaches, critical ethnography and the extended case study, to collect my data and analyze specific classroom and community activities and their impact on the 10 students in the study. These approaches encourage the researcher to view such activities within the wider macro context of the university, expand on educational theories, and explore curricular approaches that support diverse student development and alternative ways of knowing.

Recently systematic research demonstrates the educational benefits and impact of multi-racial/multi-ethnic college classrooms and curriculum from multiple perspectives. This literature candidly speaks about the need for university structures to open entrenched territories of power to new, dynamic, and diverse spaces of leadership and ways of understanding higher education. This review facilitated my understanding of why the refugee and immigrant university student populations (and other students for that matter) had not been connected with its immigrant and refugee community neighbors. The scholars I reviewed for this study have convinced me that if we critically

learn the histories of the institutions that make up public life, we can begin, slowly, to unravel and change the unbalanced systems that have become the norm.

After this review I provided a description of the alternative community service-learning program along with contextual information regarding the university and the region where the study took place. This information set the stage to explore the main questions of the study. I proceeded to review community service-learning pedagogy, a trend on most U.S. campuses today, and I ask why is it that so little research has been conducted looking at the experiences and educational benefits of this pedagogy on diverse students of color? A partial answer can be found in the historical review I discuss above. Yet to round out my inquiry, I decided to further review the research in the community service-learning field. The majority of the scholarship that I was able to read concentrated on the experiences of white middle-class students engaged in community-service learning experiences with marginalized communities of color. Having read this research, I came to understand the impact of CSL on white middle-class students interacting with communities from <u>different</u> socio-cultural, racial, ethic and economic backgrounds. Although valuable lessons can be drawn from this literature, I was concerned with the inherent contradictions that such models present (Hondagneu-Sotelo & Raskoff, 1994; Cummings, 2000).

The community-service learning model highlighted in this study focused on immigrant and refugee undergraduate students (in this case, first-generation, foreign-born students) engaged with refugee youth communities from <u>similar</u> and <u>familiar</u> socio-cultural, racial, ethic, and economic backgrounds. I was primarily interested in understanding what meaning immigrant and refugee students drew from their

participation in cross university/community experiences with like peers and communities. In this community service-learning example, I asked students to speak about their classroom and communities experiences when critical pedagogy is applied in the context of immigrant and refugee community development education. I also asked students what they learned from an alternative service-learning approach that engaged them as peers, mentors, and organizers with similar ethnic communities through their student/youth-generated photography project.

The students in the study were encouraged to tap into their cultural and strategic resources in the classroom and in their community service. For this reason I was interested in understanding how students made meaning of such an educational experience and how they wrote, spoke about, and represented this experience in their reflection papers, interviews, learning journals, and photographs. To summarize, I was interested in understanding how students reflected upon their experiences in an alternative service-learning model and how they subsequently acquired knowledge when:

- critical and experiential pedagogy are applied to classroom and community learning;
- students build relationships with racially, ethnically, socio-culturally and economically familiar and similar peers across their academic and service-learning experiences;
- students apply their community, cultural, and strategic resources (funds of knowledge) to their academic and service-learning experiences; and

- photography and writing are used as narrative expressions in the university/community learning process

To explore these areas, I read and reflected on the participants' student journals, reflection papers, interview transcriptions, photographs, project research papers, and my own reflections and field notes. I then developed a theoretical matrix through which I could analyze this data. This framework embodies literature on critical and experiential pedagogy, situated learning theory, the concept of funds of knowledge, and visual and written narratives. The discussion applied these areas to the service-learning context of the study. Through an analysis of the data using these theoretical perspectives, I have drawn some of the following conclusions.

I found that the critical pedagogy, situated and peer-learning, and culturally relevant content approaches we applied had a significant impact on the students in the study. The vast majority of the students considered the critical teaching methods and experiential educational techniques exciting, beneficial, and appropriate for learning to work with like ethnic communities in a service-learning context. Although students were not familiar with these methods at first, they stated that they had acquired important knowledge in community development work as a result of engaging with experiential and critical learning approaches. Students also discussed at length the impact on their academic experience by learning in peer relationships while simultaneously mentoring and working with refugee youth. In addition, students spoke openly about how significant it was for them to be part of a student-centered classroom that valued their cultural knowledge and experiences as refugee and immigrant learners. The following

four themes emerged as areas where students developed critical perspectives and acquired meaning and knowledge:

- learning strategies to resist and contest status quo situations at the university and in their communities;
- confirming and affirming their identities as refugee and immigrant students and community members;
- turning to critical thought and social activism to empower themselves and their communities and;
- recognizing and incorporating their creative and artistic potentials for social change.

The students in the study came to understand that the course facilitators were modeling the experiential/popular educational practices they were asking students to apply in their community service-learning settings. Students spoke frankly about their participation in these courses as their first university opportunity to centralize their experiences as immigrants and refugees in the development of classroom learning and community outreach. Additionally, students stated that being able to use their experiences and their community histories to substantiate, affirm, or contradict classroom discussions was a unique university experience. These students' statements directly speak to how applying an alternative pedagogy that intertwined critical and service-learning pedagogy, situated/peer-learning, and the concept of funds of knowledge can impact the learning and outreach experiences of refugee and immigrant students. The researchers and educators in CIRCLE strongly believed that both students' academic and service-learning experiences were benefited as a result of teaching CSL

courses through a pedagogical lens that encouraged groups of students to use their knowledge and understanding of the world to shape classroom discussions and community activities

Coordinating and organizing 20-25 students to develop student and youth initiated projects in newcomer communities is not a seamless, neat endeavor. Students spoke about the messiness they at times experienced when trying to figure out all the details to develop their community projects. It is certainly much easier for faculty in charge to assign each student a community site and have a fixed project set up at the beginning of the semester. This, however, was not the center's goal. CIRCLE's vision was to have students take the lessons they learned in the community education courses and apply them creatively to the development of their own projects with the refugee youth. Students mentioned that this at times led to individual differences, time conflicts, and disagreements, issues they were able to work through with the guidance of graduate assistants and the course faculty. More frequently, however, students talked about how this service-learning approach allowed them to get to know one other, resolve their conflicts, build lasting friendships, use their own skills and experiences as refugees and immigrants to work with the youth, and build their confidence and capacity as capable mentors and organizers in their communities.

As Shor (1996) reminds us, there are consequences of turning teacher-talk into student-centered talk. Some students will think that the teacher is not teaching, that the class is not "real" university coursework, and others will take it as an "easy" kind of course. The students in this study, however, recognized that the purpose of these alternative teaching approaches was to encourage them to lead and use their cultural

know-how in the construction of university knowledge and projects. As a first step, the application of critical and experiential pedagogy accompanied by peer-learning and culturally relevant curriculum allowed students to develop a needed sense of trust to work together as partners. These community-building experiences in turn permitted students to share their own experiences in the classroom and then transfer this knowledge to their work with the refugee youth. In fact my analysis shows that teaching and learning in this way fomented students' capacity to resist and critique mainstream structures, for they now had a space to compare how their refugee and immigrant realities and stories had been omitted in prior university experiences.

The study I cite by Torres-Guzman, Mercado, Helvia-Quintero and Rivera-Viera (1994) claims that students working as peers in a socially and culturally familiar context can lead to educational change. Do I think this is what happened with the CIRCLE project and the community service-learning courses we promoted? Though we hoped that the project would have an impact on the overall campus, I am not sure if it really led to educational change in the strict institutional sense. What I am sure of is that the experience of participating in this type of CSL program greatly influenced the educational experiences of the individual refugee and immigrant undergraduate students involved. In this sense the project did have an institutional impact because diverse students explored educational arenas they had rarely accessed or felt comfortable accessing before, like the service-learning field.

The evidence I present through student narratives also supports situated learning theory's assertions that learning, and I would say profound learning, happens when it is guided and takes place in the company of peers. I feel confident saying this because I

was one of the graduate students who drove, accompanied, guided, listened to, and laughed with many of these undergraduate students over many semesters. I witnessed how students learned from one another and supported one another in their development as community mentors and organizers. Certainly students struggled in figuring out how to do their projects and in some instances their projects didn't take off as they would have liked, but students learned and developed strong social bonds and critical knowledge through the process of working in their peer groups.

Over semesters of work with their peers and the youth, study participants reflected on the various skills they learned. Students said they learned about group dynamics, how groups develop, how community projects evolve and the complexity of getting them off the ground, the importance of communication and organization, the power of collective work, and the political and social strength a group can wield (community speak out, student run conferences, news letters etc.). Equally important, students discussed the positive influences they realized they could have on younger refugee peers as they developed their skills in community organizing, training, and outreach. According to the informants in this study, their community development experiences with similar and familiar youth confirmed and affirmed their identities as refugees and immigrants. This experience in turn affirmed their ability to transfer their lived experiences to educational and community contexts to be effective mentors with young people in their communities.

Students found the work in their peer groups to be an incredibly satisfactory component of the CSL courses. On rare occasions students had an intra-group problem or disagreement but they seldom talked about dismantling their group or peer/mentor

relationships. On the contrary, students discussed that working through their group conflicts was an important part of their community development learning process. I believe that building peer relationships amongst refugee youth and fellow immigrant and refugee undergraduate students was one of the most significant aspects of CIRCLE for the participants. In their interviews, in their writing, and in their photographs, they repeatedly turned to the notion of the peer groups and friends they made by working together. This went hand-in-hand with stressing how much they learned from one another as individuals with similar lived experiences. Through their writing and interviews about the photography project, students emphasized how their racial, ethnic, linguistic, and cultural identities had been affirmed and confirmed. Developing such an understanding within the context of their university studies also served as a platform for them to critique mainstream institutions and society's images of newcomer students and youth.

The funds of knowledge construct I explore in this study supports including diverse student realities and perspectives as assets into a community service-learning process. This case study is an example of re-conceptualizing white establishment's notions of service to ones where diverse students work directly with communities of color to develop collaborative projects. This type of programming opens new opportunities for the growing diverse student body on our campuses. This study attempts to address how a Center, when properly funded and supported, can develop service-learning courses and projects that attract and motivate students who frequently remain in the shadows when it comes to the mainstream social and academic programs available on campus.

Kiang's (1991) research describes the isolated and frustrated experiences of Southeast Asian refugee and immigrant students at a public university. Despite their exclusion from most social and academic domains, many of the students in his sample persisted, if sometimes by a thread, in attaining their college degrees. Kiang (1991) calls on educators and administrators to understand and ultimately change this dynamic by,

> recognizing the importance of reference points external to the college environment such as family obligations, memories of the past, and hopes to contribute to one's country or community that motivate students to persist in school, despite their frustration, isolation and lack of integration in the social and academic life. (p. 220)

Kiang's study implies that refugee and immigrant students should not have to feel lost, on their own, like they are sticking it out or suffering through their university years (see *Lost*-student poem in appendix). I agree with Kiang and other authors mentioned in this study that higher education administrators, researchers, and educators must further investigate areas related to refugee and immigrant student college retention and persistence. As educators it is our duty to demand a re-assessment of the "quality of life" circumstances of minority students in higher education. The student narratives and qualitative research that social scientists and educators present and share in our research are testimonies to this appeal.

I believe CIRCLE excelled at recognizing students' external reference points and integrating them into a community service-learning curriculum at a public land-grant university. I have tried to demonstrate in Chapter 6 how students who were given a space to question mainstream structures, affirm their identities as refugees and immigrants, build their social criticism skills, and develop their creative capacities felt supported not only in their academic work but also in their personal and professional

lives. Centers, like CIRCLE, that legitimize students' funds of knowledge in the classroom and service-learning contexts can positively build on the external reference points of diverse university students and thus strengthen the quality of diverse student education.

In this study, student relationships were solidified through their shared external reference points. These relationships significantly enhanced students' social and academic life at the university. For example, students often discussed and wrote about their obligations to home and community as a critical part of their identity (see My Burden and Where are We?- student poems in appendices). Being able to discuss these feelings and realities in class and with their community service teams allowed students to not only establish close working relationships but also develop political solidarity to critique and re-create their university experiences. Working with like ethnic community youth became a meaningful expression of how students could re-shape their university experiences. In many of the participants' stories, these relationships became important and pleasurable reasons to persist in their college careers. For some students their CIRCLE experience helped them make professional choices that reflected their community concerns. One student captures her experience in the following short paragraph:

> My involvement with CIRCLE is definitely one of the most unique experiences I have had at UMass. CIRCLE consists of undergraduates as well as graduate students who are dedicated to working with newcomer youth in central Massachusetts. The goal of this bonding is to help the youth and, in the process, ourselves to explore our identities and develop our skills as future leaders.

This case study is an example of integrating critical and service-learning pedagogy with a situated learning and funds of knowledge focus. The educational

setting I analyzed, through ethnographic approaches, focused on developing educational activities based on learners' experiences and knowledge. Students articulated their experiences and ideas through peer teamwork and culturally relevant or student-generated materials and contexts. This alternative model then elicited learner reflection based on their academic and community experiences under these conditions. The philosophy of the curriculum was to encourage students to fully tap into the strategic and cultural resources that they and their communities possess. In the reflection process of their learning, students wrote about these skills and knowledge sets that allowed them to be effective in their community organizing. Through their often beautifully crafted visual and written narratives, students and youth conveyed how their funds of knowledge allowed them to develop important relationships with refugee youth and collectively conceive and execute meaningful community projects.

I believe student narratives like the ones presented in this study have the potential to challenge traditional Euro-centric forms of education. In this dissertation I have attempted to focus on different pedagogies, theories, and practices that showcase student and community narratives and in so doing offer alternative perspectives for the community service-learning field and avenues for resisting Euro-centric education. Towards this end, I reviewed different schools of thought that question dominant education structures and standardization in support of listening to unheard stories. I am particularly drawn to the work of educators who believe in the capabilities of teachers and students in changing practice and programming in higher education. In learning and trying to emulate these different paths of thinking and practice, I am convinced that the multiple narratives of refugee and immigrant students at a public university can provide

new insights to this literature. If we listen carefully to students' critiques of dominant structures and the status quo, we will hear the voices of communities with incredible knowledge, expertise, and capacities. Rather than ignoring or underestimating these possibilities, models like the one presented here place them at the fore of knowledge creation.

Through this research trajectory, I have come to see refugee and immigrant students' written, spoken, and visual narratives as critical bodies of knowledge that guide, educate, and inspire fellow students, educators and future learning communities. Furthermore, Olmedo (1997) affirms that recognizing and validating the funds of knowledge of students carries the potential to reform our educational systems. She writes that students' funds of knowledge need to be viewed as the

> elements of the daily lifestyle of families in the community, as legitimate sources of knowledge, a kind of cultural capital that can be tapped by [students and] teachers to improve the educational processes of our schools. (p 550)

Another critical theme that emerged in this study relates to students turning to critical thought and social activism to empower themselves and their communities. This was evident in many of the student narratives I presented. I believe this was also apparent in students' actions and commitment to their community projects. Students' dedication, for example, to write a grant to secure funds for a participatory photography project with neighboring youth lead them to develop an acuter political and social analysis of their fellow refugee and immigrant communities in western Massachusetts. Students firmly believed that, by developing a Visual Portrayal of refugee youth in the region, they could begin to break down some of the stereotypes and misguided images that dominant society has of refugee and immigrant groups.

As undergraduate students' conscientious was raised regarding the impact of social policies like welfare reform or urban poverty on refugee communities, many participants started to question and discuss the impact of these policies on the youth families they were working with. As their relationships with the youth and CIRCLE grew, many of the students became more committed to engaging in activism related to "supporting their community". These included and went beyond the photography project. Study participants became involved in labor organizing, writing for progressive national magazines, and applying to graduate schools in law, social policy or nursing. Other participants committed themselves to continue their work with CIRCLE and the community projects they had started.

The data I collected for this study signal that students learned a great deal about community development/organizing and social change when their creative and artistic potential was recognized and incorporated into their educational experiences. Throughout their interviews and narratives, participants talked about the immense promise that creativity and the arts hold for higher education, community organizing, and social change. My participation in the CIRCLE project and the subsequent research for this study shows that photography as art can convert abstract academic or social concepts into more concrete and personalized notions related to students' identities. Through this media stories about family history, immigrant adjustment (language, culture, family roles), discrimination/racism in host societies, cultural conflict, and the emergence of bicultural identities can be explored and told.

In this case study, photography proved to affect both photographer and viewer attitudes involving emotional as well as intellectual responses to social situations. The

exhibit presentations of participants' photographs- photos of throwing up their "gang" signs and discussing mainstream society's misinterpretation of these social symbols- provided emotional and intellectual responses to a particular situation in many young newcomer lives. A recurring theme in participants' interviews and reflective writing centers on students' recognizing the power of their artistic capacities and talents for social change. The Visual Portrayal/"Here I am Now!" project demonstrates how young people make aesthetic decisions to produce visual images that challenge dominant society's ideas about identity and social reality. Incorporating forms of visual literacy, like photography, into community service-learning courses offers students and community participants opportunities to explore alternative texts and their social meaning. As the title "Here I am Now!" implies, the student/youth photographers are demanding that society recognize and respect them as they are and as they choose to define themselves. Through their photography, Brecht's quote resonates loudly-"art is not a mirror held up to reality, but a hammer with which to shape it."

Implications for Further Research

This study offers perspectives on the experiences of refugee and immigrant undergraduate students in community service-learning relationships with like ethnic communities. In this study I suggest that university programs and curricula that offer diverse students access to experiences that encourage the application of their cultural know-how and expertise in community service-learning contexts can lead students to become critical thinkers, question unjust systems, build strong social and academic relationships, and explore their creative and artistic potentials. I also found that students

when given these opportunities agreed that their overall university experience had been enhanced.

There are many areas of research that I see as important complements and extensions to the research I present in this dissertation. Systematic and comparative studies with larger student samples would help answer some of the following questions. Are immigrant and refugee students less likely to drop out or more likely to succeed in college if their university experiences reflect and incorporate their cultural, social, racial, ethnic, linguistic, and economic realities? Does student persistence increase if students are provided with opportunities to develop their academic skills in culturally relevant social and community contexts? Does curriculum that analyzes and questions institutional structures that dictate educational content, control social behavior, and inhibit creativity offer students strategies to work within and against these structures? Although I have looked in depth at the experiences of ten refugee and immigrant students and found that learners' critical skills, social experiences, and creative potential as well as their persistence and achievement at the university were enhanced, this research is suggestive of this particular case alone. To acquire more generalizable knowledge regarding these questions in the context of CSL, more extensive and comparative studies would need to be conducted.

As little research has focused on refugee and immigrant students working with like ethnic communities in community service-learning contexts, I suggest that scholars in this field investigate, question, and develop this area further. Additional research that views the tensions and contradictions inherent in CSL programs and projects that send white-middle class students to work with marginalized communities of color would also

deepen this area of study. I encourage researchers in the field to explore like-ethnic community dynamics in CSL. I believe that the growing corps of CSL researchers can offer important insights that expand our thinking and enrich our scholarship in this area.

Moreover, I believe additional research needs to take place that applies the theoretical framework I utilize in this study. I invite qualitative researchers to use these three learning theories in their educational research settings as a way to test the explanatory nature of this theoretical construct. In this research exercise, this framework offered me concrete perspectives through which I could explain and understand the narratives of the study participants. I am particularly interested in expanding my own knowledge and understanding of the possibilities of peer-learning and creative and artistic processes in university and community relations. I encourage scholars to do the same. By applying such frameworks to other diverse communities and learning situations, I believe researchers can further develop, support, contest, and expand on the positions I have taken in this dissertation.

This study suggests that the growing immigrant and refugee student populations flourish academically and socially when students' cultural, social, linguistic, and ethnic identities and experiences are reflected in higher education programming. Kiang (1991 describes these areas as the "reference points external to the college experience" (p. 220). A variety of authors (Kiang, 1991; Suarez-Orozco, 1989; Davidson, 1996) have determined that diverse students persist in college, even in the absence of institutional support, because of their external reference points (i.e., family obligation, filial piety, etc.). Nevertheless, I believe public institutions are obligated to offer students an education that incorporates and recognizes such reference points. It is in this direction

that educational reform and research must go, a direction that legitimizes the multiple experiences and knowledge regimes of diverse student groups. In a sense I have attempted to reframe the argument of student persistence from one of survival, hanging on, making it through because of individual students' attributes or experiences to one that demands a dual relationship, a relationship where our educational institutions take responsibility in supporting and incorporating students' diverse experiences into the academic and social domains of the university and where all students contributions are valued.

Implications for Institutional Practice

This study questions the dynamic of community service-learning programs that tend to engage white middle-class students with different and unfamiliar communities (Dunlap, 1998). This inquiry implies that immigrant and refugee undergraduate students benefit socially, academically, and personally from alternative community service-learning experiences that apply an ethno-cultural approach and encourage students to reflect and learn with similar and familiar peers and community partners. In addition, this study offers insights for universities administrators, educators, and staff interested in developing service-learning opportunities on their campuses that attract, interest, and benefit racially and ethnically diverse immigrant and refugee students. Through my review of the literature, I found that universities are only beginning to offer immigrant and refugee undergraduate students the opportunity to engage in service-learning relationships with community partners from similar and familiar socio-cultural, racial, ethnic, and economic backgrounds. This study presents research on how students

acquired knowledge when community service-learning models are developed in this fashion.

An additional implication for practice is that culturally relevant curriculum that encourages the use of social critique and artistic and creative expression can enhance students' educational experiences. As immigrant and refugee undergraduate student populations grow across U.S. campuses, innovative curriculum that foments learners' creative talents in the context of, for example, refugee and immigrant community development education and service, offer new ways for incorporating minority students into university life. The model I present in this study integrates academic learning, social experiences through peer relations, community service opportunities with like ethnic groups, and spaces to develop creative and exciting projects. Teaching a critical mass of refugee and immigrant students through curriculum content that reflects refugee and immigrant lived experiences prompts students to openly tell their stories, question mainstream ideals, share their knowledge, and ultimately engage in creative experiments. Given a trusting and safe space, students take risks that can facilitate cultural institutions like the university to shift their Euro-centric trajectories to more contemporary reflections of their member populations.

This study also suggests that, when students are encouraged to forge relationships with racially, ethnically, socio-culturally, and economically familiar and similar peers and youth across their academic and service-learning experiences, they build strong social and academic networks. This type of service-learning model engages immigrant and refugee students as peers to develop collaborative projects centered on community and social concerns. This study offers educators, program coordinators, and

scholars an analysis of how a community service-learning model centered on students' cultural and social experiences and the concrete realities of local refugee communities can lead students to develop important social and academic spaces often absent for minority students at large public universities (see Kiang, 1991). Thus the implications for institutional practice include reforming community service-learning access, content, and approach to better serve the needs of a growing ethnically and racially diverse student population.

In a CSL situation that invites students to reflect on their identity and utilize their cultural resources while working with like community youth, students are acknowledged as cultural insiders and cross-cultural mediators. Such an approach has significance not only to the community service-learning movement but also to studies in higher education that look at diverse student retention, persistence, and student success. Photography and written narratives were a few ways that students and youth in this CSL example portrayed their exploration of family/community, university, social, and bi-cultural identities. In this study the participants' narratives offer important lessons for higher education teachers and administrators as to how students are capable of tapping into their cultural and strategic resources (funds of knowledge) to develop and execute meaningful university service-learning projects. Research that analyzes community service-learning models that conscientiously embed the students' expertise and critical positions into university course content will contribute not only to the field of community service-learning but also to critical pedagogy, situated learning, theory and participatory research. Ultimately, I believe that by developing creative and alternative opportunities for the growing number of immigrant and refugee students in university

environs, we are paving roads that create more positive learning situations for all students on our college campuses.

APPENDIX A

SYLLABUS, EDUCATION 229

SYLLABUS
Education 229/Sec. 2
Spring 1997
International Education:
Leadership Development in Community Education

General Information

Course Title:

International Education: Leadership Development in Community Education/ Educ. 229/Sec. 2

Credits: 3

Meeting Time:

Wednesdays, 1:00- 4:00 P.M.

Meeting Room:

Hills South Rm. 483

Instructors:

Sally Habana-Hafner

Office:

CIRCLE/COCD: Room 464 Hills South

Phone:

545-2038/545-2933

Office Hours:

To be announced

Readings:

Course packet of readings available at the second meeting; minimal photocopy fee

Course Description:

The Center for Immigrant Refugee Community Leadership Empowerment (CIRCLE) has designed this seminar for undergraduate students who are interested in developing their leadership skills and ability to work with cross-cultural groups and communities. This seminar seeks to bridge international and domestic nonformal educational practices by providing participants with frameworks, materials and models utilized in community development education and leadership training throughout the world. This will be accomplished by offering a weekly seminar as well as a community outreach component targeted at:

- engaging participants in active discussion regarding the philosophies and approaches of community development education
- developing students' skills and competence in cross-cultural community development practices to build their own leadership abilities (facilitation techniques, role playing, simulation, group dynamics, team building, conflict resolution)
- involving students in team work in cross-cultural community activities with refugee and immigrant groups living in the Western Massachusetts region

The Educ. 229/Section 2 seminar is designed to use Paulo Freire's approach of action-reflection whereby the interaction with the community is the action and the seminar is the time used for reflection and learning. Class meetings will be devoted to building students' skills in leadership and in developing relations with the Vietnamese, Cambodian, Russian-speaking and Tibetan newcomer groups in Western Massachusetts. The course will also focus on building teams amongst groups of students who will then participate in community activities that CIRCLE and other university projects are involved in. These will include community youth activities, citizenship training classes with refugee/immigrant community members, community-service learning activities, community theater projects and others.

Course Competencies:

By the end of this course the participants will be able to:

Identify their identity and introduce themselves within the context of their ethnic identity.

Findout how they can connect with refugee and immigrant communities through this course and the CIRCLE project.

Demonstrate an awareness of the concept of teamwork with their experiences in their community.

Describe the role and scope of the Student Advisory Council and SAC 's role in CIRCLE activities.

Identify and discuss their community problems.

Demonstrate an awareness of themselves as product of their own cultural upbringing.

Explain their opinion on culture and world view.

Describe the stages of cross - cultural adaptation.

Give examples of own ability to watch, listen. and wait for suitable entry in a community.

Identify the crucial issues of trust and respect in doing outreach in the community.and increase awareness of culturally appropriate and different ways of showing respect and trust .

Discuss their role as a community developer/facilitator as an insider and outsider.

Explore the different issues of insider and outsider within the context of working with immigrant and refugee communities in the U. S.

Learn how to identify community needs, problems, and resources through Community Mapping Techniques.

Develop strategy for different degrees of interpersonal communication between outreach workers and community members.

Identify and discuss their experiences with the different levels of discrimination (individual, organizational, institutional, and cultural).

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Identify their strengths and weakness ain the areas of communication skills, problem solving skills ,decision making skills, morale building skills, social relationships, and conflict resolution skills.

Discuss the basic principles of Participatory Action Research and identify ways how PAR can be applied in practical situations.

Identify and analyze forces which either help or restrain in achieving goals.

SCHEDULE

Class 1	January 29	Introduction/Need Assessment/Course Overview
Class 2	February 5	Cultural Identity/ (cultural Wheel)
Class 3	February 12	Group Identity /(CIRCLE Values and Assumptions)
Class 4.	February 19	Community Identity / (Kulati Story)
Class 5.	February 26	Freire Approaches/Problem-Posing Approach
Class 6.	March 5	Community Dynamics/Forms of Adaptation
Class 7.	March 12	Cross-Cultural Adaptation/ Immigrants & Refugee
No Class	March 19	SPRING BREAK
Class 8.	March 26	Participatory Action Research
Class 9.	April 2	Team-Building / Collective Leadership Skills
Class 10	April 9	Community Development/Collective Action
Class 11	April 16	Community Outreach
No Class	April 23	Monday Schedule
Class 12	May 7	Group Reflection
Class 13	May 14	Presentation

Requirements:

Commitment: The success of the seminar depends on all participants' commitment to working in teams in community field visit activities with particular refugee/immigrant group or organization. Participating actively in class/community sessions is also an integral part of the learning experience in this course. Students will be expected to complete the assigned readings for each session to further meaningful discussion. Full attendance in class sessions and community meetings are essential and expected.

Student Teams/Community Field Visits: By the end of the third meeting students will have formed community field visit teams. Each team has to make three community field visits. First

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field visit will be focoused on community issues and needs, second will be about the organization or program of the organization, and the third will be structured interviews with program staff or community leaders .

Journal/Field Notes: Students will keep a journal and field notes to document their experiences, observations and learning's in the classroom and in the community. Having a complete and consistent journal/field writing will be an important part of the course grade. Journals will be collected every 4 weeks by the instructors.

Reflection Paper: Each student will be responsible for three self- reflection papers (3-5 page) each highlighting their own experiences and learning's throughout the course such as ethnic identity, community dynamics, and collective leadership. Guidelines for self-reflection papers will be handed out to participants in the following class meeting.

Group Paper: Student teams will be expected to write a 15-20 page group paper focused on the seminar learning's and community outreach activities that each group has been involved in. This paper will be turned in at the end of the semester and guiding questions to facilitate the writing of this paper will be handed out by the third seminar meeting.

Grading Policy

Students will be expected to turn in all journal and papers in a timely fashion. Turning in papers late will definitely affect students' grade. Students are expected to approach the instructors during office hours or by appointment if they have questions or personal issues in regards to papers and assignments. The following is a break down of percentages for the grading of the course:

Attendance/Participation	20%	Self-Reflection Paper	20%
Student Team Community Outreach	20%	Group Paper	25%
Journal/Field Notes	15%		

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Group Presentation: Each student teams will prepare an engaging and interactive group presentation focused on reflective learnings from community youth outreach initiatives. This presentation will be shared with the rest of the class at the end of the semester. The following are some guiding points to facilitate the development of this presentation. The main idea behind this presentation is that it firstly be a collaborative learning experience for all the members in your group and secondly that you relay to us (your audience) key ideas, learnings, challenges, concerns about your community outreach project

- Remember this presentation should be interactive, meaning that through various techniques, methods, and approach you develop a presentation that engages the audience. You will be presenting for about 40-45 minutes, so the presentation should include an interactive part and a dialogue or question and answer part. Handouts of your learnings, research, bibliography, materials etc. will be helpful to you classmates. Be Creative!!

- The following are just some ideas of things you might want to consider for you presentation:
  * Collage and Dialogue
  * Role Play/Theater
  * Video Presentation and Discussion
  * Photonovela
  * Oral History through drama, photography or art
  * Recorded Interviews
  * Comedy/Humor
  * Game Show or Game you have developed
  * Dances
  * Songs
  * Simulation of community development activities that you have used as educators and facilitators
  * Bibliography of your research, materials, activities or books you found helpful
  * Puppets
  * Social Drama
  * Scrapbooks/Album

APPENDIX B

CHANCELLOR'S COUNSEL – CIRCLE STUDENT PROPOSAL

CENTER FOR INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION

School of Education
University of Massachusetts
Hills House South
Amherst, MA 01003-4110 USA

Telephone: 413-545-0465 • Fax: 413-545-1263 • Internet: CIE@educ.umass.edu

Student Advisory Council
CIRCLE (Center for Immigrant Refugee
Community Leadership and Empowerment)
464 Hills South
University of Massachusetts
March 13, 1997

Chancellor's Counsel on Community,
Diversity and Social Justice
c/o Office of Human Relations
206 Middlesex House
University of Massachusetts

Dear Chancellor's Counsel on Community, Diversity and Social Justice:

Please find enclosed the collaborative proposal written by the Student Advisory Council(SAC), a diverse UMass student initiated organization working with refugee and immigrant youth in Western Massachusetts. With the input of the youth we work with, the 15 students that make up SAC came together on March 8, 1997 during a full day workshop in order to collectively write a response to the request for proposal that the Chancellor's Counsel presented to the UMass community.

We believe that the proposal we present here is an innovative approach to developing educational activities that encourage collaboration and community building between undergraduate students and the recently arrived refugee and immigrant youth in the area. The process of collectively writing this proposal is a representation of the community development philosophies that we embody in our work with multi-ethnic communities. Through this project, "A Collective Visual Portrayal: Photography and Art with Undergraduates and Newcomer Youth", it is our intention to promote mutual respect and understanding around the experiences of the Cambodian and Vietnamese youth communities and their families with the larger university community. We strongly feel that through creative expression beyond words, educational opportunities for linguistically diverse groups will be achieved.

It is with a spirit of respect for cross-cultural experiences that we present this proposal to the Chancellor's Counsel selection committee.

Thank you for your consideration and review of our proposed project.

Please contact: Magda Ahmed at 256-4298, Christine Chin at 546-3132 or Rin Mouen at 256-8038 should you have an further questions.

Sincerely, The Student Advisory Council

A COLLECTIVE VISUAL PORTRAYAL: PHOTOGRAPHY AND ART WITH UNDERGRADUATES AND NEWCOMER YOUTH

A Proposal Presented to the Chancellor's Counsel on Community, Diversity and Social Justice

Introduction

The Student Advisory Council (SAC) is a diverse, informal, self-initiated group of 15 undergraduate student leaders. It has emerged from the enthusiasm and commitment of a group of multicultural students dedicated to applying the skills we have gained from the Education 229 and 329 seminars. These seminars and our council are community-service learning oriented and sponsored by CIRCLE (Center for Immigrant Refugee Community Leadership and Empowerment) in the Center for International Education at the School of Education. Our mission is geared toward community development education concerning cross-cultural perspectives with refugee and immigrant (newcomer) communities in Western Massachusetts. SAC follows an ethic that does not work for the community, instead we work with communities as facilitators. In particular, SAC works toward creating spaces for immigrant and refugee youth to come together, share experiences and promote community leadership and action. To further achieve these goals, SAC proposes to continue their work with 15 Cambodian (Khmer) and Vietnamese youth in the Amherst, Northampton and Springfield areas by developing a visual portrayal of family, community and self identity. In the process of creating this documentary exhibit, SAC hopes to open students, youth, the university and community up to new ideas and ways of learning about communication and leadership. The process of collaborative undergraduate/youth involvement through creative expression goes beyond traditional banking pedagogy and the written word and moves toward an education that stretches itself outside the classroom to focus on community-based learning and refugee/immigrant experience.

Problem Statement

Due to the lack of understanding and awareness of the diverse communities that exist outside of the university setting, through this project, we the members of SAC feel that this problem must be addressed. Through our community outreach projects youth newcomer, we strive to bridge the gap between the academy and the immigrant and refugee communities of Amherst, Northampton and Springfield. Specifically, with the Cambodian (Khmer) and Vietnamese youth, we focus on collective leadership development so that these youth can empower themselves to promote mutual respect within and between their communities as well as encourage activism towards a better understanding of their identities and experiences in the U.S. In addition, we, as UMass undergraduate students, have the opportunity to link our academic coursework to community outreach through our engagement in Education 329 and our Student Advisory Council. As mentors and facilitators in community building, we recognize the need for immigrant/refugee youth to have educational opportunities to work with undergraduates who have had similar lived experiences.

In this specific proposal, we envision facilitating and implementing a public visual art gallery with the youth groups we work with. Through the use of photography and art, the SAC and the Vietnamese and Khmer newcomer youth, would like to document our voices as immigrants and refugees through images. Our interactions with the youth at meetings in their schools and homes, leadership training workshops, university cultural events and community outreach activities are the specific scenes where our visual documentation will

unfold. These photographs and drawings will then be displayed publicly at UMass and in the communities where the youth live.

Project Objectives

Through this participatory and collective visual portrayal of Khmer and Vietnamese youth group and SAC, we seek to:

- Learn from one another about mutual respect and gain further appreciation around issues of diversity and difference across cultures through photography and art
- Learn more about ourselves and our identities through photography and art
- Create dialogue around community and cultivate inter-ethnic communication
- Display a visual art gallery to open community and campus-wide discussion around immigrant and refugee youth situations in Western Massachusetts
- Collaborate on a mutual project through our partnership of newcomer youth and college students to build awareness of immigrant and refugee concerns.
- Gain a sense of accomplishment through a mobile art exhibit
- Creatively discuss notions of identity and share our art and learnings publicly with the larger community.

Methods

1. Through the use of cameras and art supplies for drawing and painting we will collaboratively work with the already established Khmer and Vietnamese youth groups in Amherst, Northampton (Khmer) and Springfield (Vietnamese) to express the visual images of our families, selves and communities.

2. In order to accomplish this, we will integrate discussion about art and photography into our meetings and activities with the youth. This will be done through a small training on the application of participatory photography and art including: examples of photo exhibits focusing on community, what our goals of such a mobile gallery might be, an emphasize on personal freedom in the artistic process, and photography and art as a medium for expression beyond words.

3. We will then go out into our communities to take photographs and in some of our meetings we will spend time using the art supplies to draw and paint. Once we have come back with our developed photographs, we will decided on which pictures we would like to use in the gallery. The SAC, as the facilitators of the process, will create dialogue with the youth as to why we all think certain pictures are meaningful, what a particular picture represents to our group, what we think this photo will say to others etc. Titles, captions, quotes, poems, expressions, or explanations will be written collectively for the pictures chosen for the display.

4. Once the photographs and drawings are chosen, we will work on mounting and framing our art for display. We will also contact galleries such as the New Africa House, Hamden Gallery, Jones Library, The Bang Center, The Vietnamese American Civic Association, Forest Park Library and others to invite them to display our exhibit.

5. Youth and SAC will be present their art exhibit in public forums to create a dialogue, answer questions and describe the process they went through with the university community, student/youth families and other community members. A reception will be held at the opening gallery and recognition certificates will be presented to the youth.

Plan and Timeline

ACTIVITIES	April 1997	May 1997	June 1997	Sept. 1997	Oct. 1997	Nov. 1997	Dec. 1997
• Research photography as an empowering community vehicle.	_____	_____					
• Discuss the project further with Khmer & Vietnamese youth groups needs assessment and initial goal setting.	_____	_____	_____				
Series of 8 interactive Project Meetings with both Khmer and Vietnamese Newcomer Youth • Meeting #1: Who is participating, where we will meet, review our goals and refine. (both youth groups)				_____ Second week in Sept.			
• Meeting #2 Discuss possibilities, ground rules, guidelines of project. Discuss what youth would like out of a training on art and photography.				_____ Third week in Sept.			
• Meeting #3: Interactive Photography and Art Training, Facilitated by SAC with youth. Distribute Cameras					_____ First week in Oct.		
• Meeting #4 : Collect cameras and talk and reflect about the experience through art (drawing and painting)					_____ Third week in Oct.		
• Meeting #5 Develop Pictures and discuss results and decide on themes, format, photos etc..					_____ Fourth week in Oct.		

Plan and Timeline ACTIVITIES (continued)	April 1997	May 1997	June 1997	Sept. 1997	Oct. 1997	Nov. 1997	Dec. 1997
• Meeting # 6 SAC work individually with youth on the presentation, formatting, mounting, display ideas and themes etc.. of photos and art						First 2 weeks in Nov.	
• Meeting # 7 Developing the overall exhibit and display. and reflecting on it						Last week in Nov.	
• Meeting #8 Develop youth and SAC presentations and Publicly display Visual Portrayal in Amherst, Noho and Springfield							Month of Dec. and beyond
• Opening Reception and Celebration with University and Community Members. Certificates will be presented to youth for participating in this event							Begin-nning of Dec.

Evaluation

We plan to have ongoing formative evaluation at each meeting during the period of our program. This will be done through reflections, informal analysis (i.e.: forcefield analysis, check-ins on feelings,) and personal interactions with the youth and students to see whether our project is meeting it's stated objectives and the participants exceptions. We will also prepare final presentations for the opening reception which will be testimonies of our feeling and attitudes toward the process of developing a visual art exhibit collectively. At the exhibitions we will invite viewers and attendees to comment on our presentation and on the artwork in a guestbook. This guestbook will be later incorporated into our final evaluation as to the meaningfulness of presenting our work in public and discussing it with the larger community

Budget

We feel committed to having this project become a reality and therefore we realize that it will be necessary to do outside fundraising to supplement the budget we are presenting to the Chancellor's Counsel. We feel that the youth we work with will truly benefit from having their own cameras to become investigators and documentors of their communities. Since this cost represents a large part of the budget, the SAC group will hold fundraisers such as bake sales and lunch sales at the Center for International Education as well as ask the community organizations involved in displaying our art to donate funds toward the opening project reception where the university, community and students/youth families will be invited to attend.

Cameras: One for each youth member (15 youth : 8 Khmer/7 Vietnamese @ $35 SAC members will borrow or use their own)	$525.00
Art Supplies: paper, charcoal, paint, paint brushes, markers, matting board, glue, plastic laminate picture frames of some photos (Caldors @ 5.00 per frame)	$150.00
Film for Cameras: (30/36 exposure rolls @ $5.00 : one for each youth and SAC member)	$150.00
Development and Enlargement of Photos (development of 30/36exposure rolls @ $9.00 with enlargements)	$350.00
Transportation (Gas money for drivers)	$ 50.00
Meeting Supplies: food and drink for 8 meetings	$ 75.00
Opening Exhibit Reception (drink, snacks, certificates flyers etc.)	$200.00
TOTAL COSTS	$1,500.00

APPENDIX C

STUDENT POEMS

"My Burden"

Hope

My parents hope life will be better in the U.S.

Racism, Bigotry, Discrimination

My cries at night because her co-workers are racist bigots

Over-worked, Under-paid

My dad has two full time jobs, he still makes under $40,000

Education

Supposedly this is the key to the "American Dream"

Investment

My parents have invested everything in our education

"The Dream"

Our education will lead us to financial stability and success

"The Burden"

I feel a heavy load on my shoulders

Anger, Fear, Pain

I am overwhelmed with my filial responsibilities

Helpless

My parents slowly deteriorate as they work

Faith

They continue their jobs with the faith that we will restore their "honor"

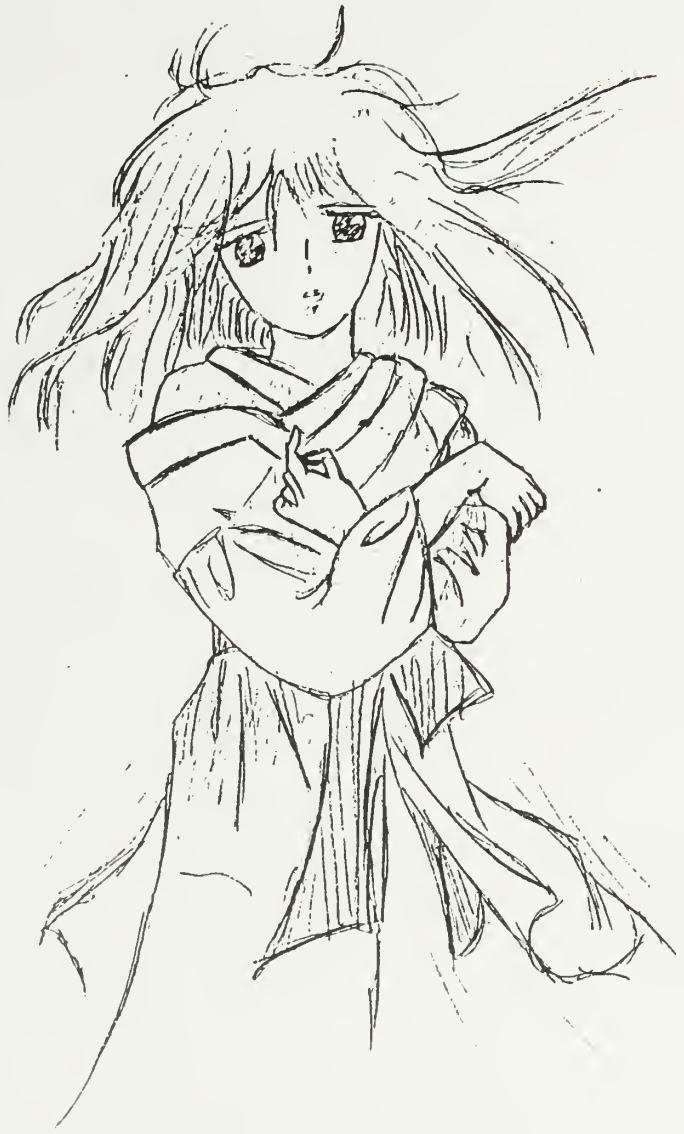
This is their struggle

I am their "hope"

It is "my burden."

Where are We?

Yellow skin against a white backdrop
Students playing with delight crackles of laughter
Songs of wind and white powder
Shades of New England spring
"Where are we?" she asks
"Mount Holyoke" I say with happiness and content
Sweltering rays of summer hits my back
Burns of car leather on my white silky skin
Mirages on baked highways
"Where are we?" she asks
"Texas " I say
Spots of light blurred against the misty window
Pedestrians fumbling for their steps
Yellow, red, black umbrellas canvas the gray sky
Beats of rain beads against car roofs
Knocks of heels on concrete pavements
Honking of car horns and curses of dissatisfaction
"Where are we?" she asks
Boston I say
Warm summer breezes knock against the tamarind limbs
Banana leaves shelter from the tropical rains
Red stains of dirt paint the bottom of my feet
Children running around in their birthday suits
Bicycles and Hondas ride the street
Young schoolgirls clothed in traditional white
"Where are we?" I ask
"Vietnam " she whispers
"When will we be home?" I ask
She says "We are home." with happiness and content.



Lost

I called out, "Is anyone there!"
But there was no answer,
  perhaps she didn't hear,
  to come by my side,
But no one was there.
  She had gone to hide.
  She was hiding from herself,
  because she was scared,
  to do something different,
that no one else had dared.
She was always the type to
  do what she was told.
But often wanted more,
    to be bold.
I kept searching
  but she didn't make a sound,
I was searching for myself,
For I am lost,
    and have never been found.

4/97
Sue

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